THE LIFE OF BENJAMIN DISRAELI

EARL OF BEACONSFIELD

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Earl of Beaconsfield 1881
from the portrait by Sir John Millais P.R.A.
in the possession of Viscount Hambleden

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THE LIFE OF
BENJAMIN DISRAELI
EARL OF BEACONSFIELD

BY GEORGE EARLE BUCKLE

IN SUCCESSION TO W. F. MONYPENNY

VOLUME VI

1876—1881

WITH PORTRAITS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Read no history, nothing but biography, for that is life without theory.—CONTARINI FLEMING.

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

1920

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Beaconsfield.

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CHAPTER I.

Reopening of the Eastern Question.

1875–1876.

The change of name corresponded closely with a change in the dominant theme of the life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield. The name Disraeli suggests, in the political sphere, the consummate Parliamentarian, who was proud of the House of Commons and of whom the House of Commons was proud; the destroyer of Peel, the re-creator of the Conservative party, the reformer of the borough suffrage, the promoter of Tory Democracy. The name Beaconsfield has quite other associations, far removed from domestic party politics and gladiatorial combats in Parliament. It recalls the imperial and European statesman, the faithful custodian of his country's interests at a critical epoch in international politics, the leading figure at a European Congress presided over by Bismarck and containing Gortchakoff, Andrassy, and Salisbury among its members. It is for ever associated with the maintenance, and presentation to the external world, of England's 'magnificent and awful cause.' When Beaconsfield died, Salisbury finely said of him that 'zeal for the greatness of England was the passion of his life.' That was generally accepted in 1881 as a natural and, in the main, a just appreciation; but, had it been said in 1874 of the Disraeli who then became Prime Minister for the second time, it would rather have provoked criticism and denial than have obtained general acceptance

And yet the ardent patriotism, the high imperial spirit, which dominated Beaconsfield, had always been latent in

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Disraeli, and had given frequent signs of its presence to those who looked for them. His youthful novel, the *Young Duke*, contains this fervid apostrophe to his country: 'Few can love thee better than he who traces these idle lines. . . . If ever the hour shall call, my brain and life are thine';[1] and in the tract, *Gallomania*, of the same period, he describes his politics as comprised in one word—England.[2] So, in the days of the struggle between Free Trade and Protection, what he strove for was the union of all classes to promote the greatness and prosperity of the whole country; the agriculture, the commerce, and the manufactures working together as co-mates and partners.[3] In the Crimean War he insisted that it was the duty of the Opposition, which he led, to support the Sovereign and maintain the honour of the country.[4] And, when combating the policy of universal intermeddling pursued by Palmerston and Russell, he was careful to insist that Britain would never tolerate aggression on its independence or empire; that, when it entered on a just quarrel, it would never cease its efforts till it had accomplished its aim; that, on fitting occasion, it would even be prepared, without allies, to encounter a world in arms.[5] Skelton saw, and pointed out in 1867, that the vision of 'this mightier Venice, this imperial republic on which the sun never sets,' fascinated Disraeli; that England was 'the Israel of his imagination'; and that, if he had his chance, he would be the imperial Minister before he died.[6] So the imperialism of the 1872 programme, of the firm remonstrance with Berlin in May, 1875, of the Suez Canal purchase, and of the Royal Titles Bill, was but a natural development; and with the reopening of the Eastern Question, and the escape from the detail of domestic politics provided by the transfer to the Lords, foreign policy, which from first to last he maintained to be of primary, of paramount importance,[7]

[1] See Vol. I., p. 132. [2] See Vol. I., p. 210. [3] See Vol. III., p. 200.
[4] See Vol. III., p. 537. [5] See Vol. IV., pp. 260, 310, 346.
[6] See Vol. IV., p. 559. [7] See Vol. I., p. 208, and Vol. V., p. 191.

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overshadowed and dwarfed in Beaconsfield's mind all other issues.

When Disraeli left the Commons, the Eastern Question had been occupying the increasing attention of the Government for a year; but only in the last few weeks had it become at all matter of controversy, Hartington, the Opposition leader, having deliberately said, when raising the subject in the House, so recently as June 9, 'I do not believe there exists in the country any distrust of the proceedings of Her Majesty's Government.' No sooner, however, had the Prime Minister quitted the arena where he could answer his chief accuser face to face, than the heather was set on fire by Gladstone with a pamphlet on *Bulgarian Horrors*, and a controversy was kindled which was never suffered to die down so long as Beaconsfield remained in office.

The Eastern Question, as it presented itself to Disraeli in the seventies, was one side of the great problem, how to safeguard the British Empire, with its immense commercial and territorial interests in the Levant, in the Persian Gulf, in India, in Australasia, and in the Far East, in face of a simultaneous and sweeping advance of Russian power and propaganda, both in Europe and in Asia, towards the south and the sea. We know now that the Colossus had feet of clay; but then it seemed a reasonable fear that, unless sharply checked, he might bestride at any rate the Eastern world. While in Asia the crumbling Tartar kingdoms were falling one after another under Russian sway, in Europe the Ottoman Empire, which had long barred Russian progress to that key of Mediterranean dominion, Constantinople, had been stricken with a sickness which was for a while arrested by the Crimean War, but which, if not carefully tended, might well prove mortal.

It was nearly five hundred years since, in the battle of Kossovo and in subsequent campaigns in the Balkans and in Greece, the Ottoman Turks, a martial Asian tribe of Mohammedan faith, had submerged the Serbs, the

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Bulgars, and the Greeks; it was more than four hundred years since they had extinguished the Eastern Empire, that lingering remnant of the Roman State, by the capture of Constantinople. All the subjected races were Christian, after, in the main, the Eastern rite; but many landowners and others accepted the religion of the conquerors. The Greeks were the representatives of the foremost civilisation of the ancient world, a civilisation which had flourished more than two thousand years before Disraeli's day, and which under Alexander of Macedon first, and afterwards under Constantine and his successors, had commanded an empire in three continents. Both Serbs and Bulgars were, in world history, like the Turks themselves, comparative late-comers, the one from a north-east European, the other from an Asiatic, home, and both, also like the Turks, were only partially civilised; but both races, one pure Slav, the other mixed Slav and Tartar, at one time exercised imperial sway in the Balkans. During a couple of periods from the ninth to the thirteenth century the Bulgars had enjoyed an empire stretching from the Black Sea to the Adriatic, including most of the peninsula except the part south of Thessaly and Epirus, and except the immediate neighbourhood of Constantinople. To them succeeded the Serbs, who, in the fourteenth century, included in their kingdom the whole upper portion of the peninsula from the Save and Danube almost to the Ægean, and from the Adriatic to the Lower Maritza, having, moreover, a lordship over Bulgaria proper which carried their dominion to the Black Sea. Both these medieval empires had perished as though they had never been; but highlanders have long memories.

The Ottoman Empire, based upon these ruins, and embracing large tracts of Asia and Africa as well as of Europe, had a period of great magnificence and renown in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; it was feared and courted by European potentates of every degree. The flood of Ottoman conquest had indeed twice carried the Turks to the gates of Vienna; but since the beginning

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of the eighteenth century their dominion in Europe had been restricted to the Balkan peninsula; and the nineteenth century had seen a serious inroad made even there on their authority. While the Ottomans were still a conquering race, the empire was well administered, taxation was light, and the subject races had little cause of complaint. But the Turkish conquests were never thoroughly consolidated. There was little or no intermarriage between the ruling race and the ruled; Turks, Slavs, and Greeks dwelt together side by side but were never fused into a nation. Accordingly, when the heritage of Solyman the Magnificent passed in 1566 to a series of incompetent successors, there was rapid decay. Corruption and inefficiency at the centre of government produced corruption and oppression throughout the provinces. Misgovernment rekindled the national spirit of the oppressed peoples, and insurrections and revolutionary wars, often successful, were the inevitable outcome.

Since about 1830, three great peninsular communities had escaped from the effective control of the Turks. Greece, south of Thessaly and Epirus, had become absolutely independent. Moldavia and Wallachia, the principalities between the Danube and the Carpathians, after receiving local autonomy in 1830, had become practically independent by the Treaty of Paris in 1856, and had subsequently been united into a single state, Rumania, in 1861. Serbia, under Prince Milosh, had definitely achieved autonomy in 1830, and ecclesiastical independence in 1831; and the Turks had evacuated in 1867 the fortified places which they held under the earlier arrangements, thus giving Serbia virtual, if not technical, independence. Even Bulgaria, which had seemed the most hopelessly submerged of all the nationalities, had shown signs of reviving national consciousness, and had secured recognition of her Church in a Bulgarian exarchate in 1870, though her political subjection remained unmodified. Montenegro, the little Slav State in the fastnesses of the Dinaric Alps, had never submitted to

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the Turkish invader. Thus, in 1875, the effective Turkish Empire in Europe had dwindled to the Slav provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the north-west of the peninsula, between the Save and Austrian Dalmatia, the adjoining sanjak of Novi Bazar, Bulgaria on the Danube and the Black Sea, Albania and Epirus on the Adriatic, Thessaly and Macedonia on the Ægean, and Thrace and the district immediately around Constantinople, commanding the Sea of Marmora and the Straits. Turkey in Europe could hardly suffer much further territorial diminution, and yet remain a real make-weight in Near Eastern politics.

While the Turkish power, largely owing to a succession of incapable Sultans, was waning through the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, the power of Russia, directed by energetic rulers, from Peter through Catharine to Nicholas, was steadily increasing, and was more and more applied to acquiring control over Turkish policy. Of the same or a similar Slav race, and professing the same type of Christianity, as the principal subject peoples of Turkey in Europe, the Russians were also spurred on by the economic necessity of keeping the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles open for their Black Sea trade. Constantinople, accordingly, with its command of both waterways, and its tenure of the keys of two continents, became their inevitable aim. By two treaties, that of Kutchuk-Kainardji in 1774, and that of Unkiar-Skelessi in 1833, Russia obtained, at any rate for the time, that exclusive right to champion the Christian subject races which she recognised as the most efficient lever for making her will prevail with the Sublime Porte.

It took British diplomacy long to comprehend its interests in the Near East. William Pitt the younger, indeed, even before the war with France, endeavoured, but in vain, to rouse his countrymen to a sense of the dangers involved in a Russian advance to the Mediterranean. In spite of Napoleon's boast that Egypt was the place where he would strike a mortal blow at the British Empire,

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it was not until the nineteenth century was past its infancy that British diplomacy came to realise how important the Near East and the Caliphate at Constantinople were to a Power which was established in India and ruled over a large and increasing number of Mohammedan subjects. Canning, while forwarding Greek independence, had successfully combated Russian claims to exclusive or even preponderant rights in Turkey; but it was Palmerston who, by his insistence in tearing up the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi in 1841 and by his successful prosecution of the Crimean War, had finally erased from the diplomatic map all trace of special Russian influence over the Sublime Porte. The Treaty of Paris, which concluded that war, made the support of the integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire a principle, not merely of British, but of European policy.

Russia had never acquiesced in this defeat of her claims in Turkey. For a time she turned her energies rather in the direction of Asiatic expansion; but her Government carefully watched European developments that might favour a resumption of her Balkan pretensions. Turkey did little or nothing to utilise the breathing-space afforded her by the Crimean War. In spite of fair professions and paper edicts, misgovernment and oppression were rife, so that there was a promising field for the spread of propaganda, secret societies, and conspiracies. A movement, known as Pan-Slavism, perhaps scientific in origin, but speedily diverted to political ends, sprang up in Russia and in neighbouring Slav countries, with the object of promoting the racial feeling and unity of the Slav peoples; an ideal which could at that period only be realised in practice under Russian hegemony. Though the Russian Government looked somewhat askance at the revolutionary aspects of the movement, they made adroit use of it for undermining Turkish dominion in Europe. They sent as Ambassador to Constantinople in 1864 a Pan-Slavonic enthusiast, Count Ignatieff, who made it his chief aim, during the thirteen

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years of his mission, to bring under Russian influence all the Christian nationalities of Turkey and especially the Bulgarians, and to teach them to look to Russia as their eventual liberator from the Turkish yoke. It was an aim which could, of course, only be pursued in a semi-official and secret manner, so that it might always be disavowed when inconvenient by the Russian Foreign Office; but it was steadily kept in view not merely by the embassy at Constantinople but by the whole Russian consular staff throughout the peninsula. Hence, owing to oppression on the one hand and intrigue on the other, the Balkans became honeycombed with conspiracies and secret societies, connived at, if not fostered by, Russian diplomacy; a state of things which a statesman like Disraeli, only too sensible of the importance of such underground workings in international politics, was little likely to disregard.

While the ground was thus being quietly prepared by a long course of subterranean intrigue, the Franco-German War provided, as we have seen, an opportunity for an open advance. In return for the benevolent neutrality which Russia had extended to Germany in her hour of danger, Bismarck was quite ready to encourage his Eastern neighbour to re-establish her naval power in the Black Sea. With his connivance, Gortchakoff, in October, 1870, denounced the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty of Paris, and proclaimed that the Tsar would resume his 'sovereign rights' in those waters; pleading, in defence of this repudiation of solemn obligations, that, owing to recent infringements of European treaties, it would be difficult to maintain that the written law 'retains the moral validity which it may have possessed at other times.' This was a cynical adaptation to Russia's case of the principles on which Bismarck's foreign policy had been based, and a direct defiance to the Powers who had, actively or passively, imposed their will upon her in the Crimean War. But with France under Germany's heel, Italy occupied with taking posses-

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sion of Rome, and Austria indisposed, after her lesson in 1866, to adventure, Great Britain could find no effective support in maintaining the sanctity of the written European law, and had to accept, at the Congress of London in 1871, a revision of the Treaty of Paris in the sense desired by Russia. It should, however, be noted that, in all other respects, save that of naval force in the Black Sea, the Treaty of London upheld and reaffirmed the provisions of the Treaty of Paris.

It was on the Treaty of Paris, thus revised and reestablished only four years previously by the Treaty of London, that Disraeli took his stand when the Eastern Question was reopened in 1875. The maintenance of the faith of public treaties was always a leading feature in his political system; and in this case the recent reversion, through the opening of the Suez Canal, of almost the whole Eastern trade to the Mediterranean route made it, to his mind, more than ever necessary for England to support her traditional policy. He obtained a control of the Canal itself by the purchase of the Khedive's shares; he looked to the integrity and independence of Turkey, solemnly recognised by Europe, and especially guaranteed at Paris in 1856 by a tripartite treaty between England, France, and Austria, to guard the imperial route against a flank attack. In this way European peace and British interests would be alike secured.

The Treaty of Paris recited that it was the Sultan's intention to introduce reforms for the benefit of his Christian subjects. Disraeli acknowledged the obligation imposed on England, as a leader among the Powers who had ousted Russia from her protectorate of Christians in Turkey, to use her influence at Constantinople to secure for them tolerable government; and he was the more ready to fulfil this obligation as he realised that without tolerable government it must be difficult to ensure either integrity or independence. But he could not admit that individual signatory Powers had any right of armed interference, probably leading to occupa-

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tion, in order to enforce reform; still less that the non-fulfilment of reform dispensed the signatories from observing their guarantee.

There was one element, however, in the problem which Disraeli took insufficiently into account. A fervent believer in race, he had not been converted, even by the success of the Italian Risorgimento and by the establishment of the German Empire, to any sympathy with the cognate idea of nationality. His belief in race as a principle was in its essence a belief in his own race: and the aims of the Jews, whatever they may have been before and since, were, in his day, largely divorced from the assertion of political nationality in any form. Though some leading Jews, such as Sir Moses Montefiore, were already promoting Jewish colonies in Palestine, the modern Zionist movement for the restoration of Jewish population and power in their ancient land had not yet begun; and Jewish aspirations were still mainly directed to the attainment first of equality of status, and next of a leading position in business, art, and politics, among the several nations where they were settled. As individual Jews had thus won fame and power among the Christian peoples of the West, so individual Greeks and Slavs, Arabs and Armenians had risen to influence and authority in the Turkish State. With permeation of this kind he had every sympathy; but, convinced as he was of the benefits derived from the blending of diverse elements into strong centralised Powers like France and Great Britain, he distrusted movements which would break up existing Empires with no likelihood of anything but chaos to take their place. To apply the principle of nationality in the Balkans was obviously a difficult matter. Greek, Roman, Greco-Roman, Bulgarian, Serbian, and Ottoman empires had each in turn dominated practically the whole region. Consequently, in many districts, notably in Macedonia and along the coasts, Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, and Turks were inextricably intermingled; and the mutual

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antagonisms of the subject races, with their irreconcilable historical claims and their different stages of civilisation, often prevailed over their common dislike of the governing Turk.

Of these grave difficulties Gladstone took little heed. In regard to nationality he was, as Disraeli was not, responsive to the spirit of the age. Starting from a lively appreciation of the aspirations of unemancipated Italy and half-emancipated Greece, he welcomed similar stirrings among the Slav peoples. In later life he developed so active a sympathy with the real or pretended nationalist movements in various parts of the world that he could recognise a 'people rightly struggling to be free' even in the dervish fanatics of the Sudan. In the present case he had the insight to discern the makings of a nation in downtrodden Bulgaria. He was ready even to accept and applaud invading Russian armies as fitting liberators of the Christian subjects of Turkey.

But what claim had Russia to pose as a crusader in the cause of humanity? Did Christian Russia compare so very favourably with Mohammedan Turkey? She had indeed recently emancipated her serfs, but she had done little else to raise her backward peoples in the social scale; and the knout and Siberia were among her ordinary instruments of government. Poland was a warning as to her treatment of a subject nationality; for mercilessness and outrage the Cossacks had already acquired in her Asian wars a terrible reputation which the deeds of the Bashi-bazouks by no means obliterated. These were not reflections that Beaconsfield and his colleagues could utter in public about a professedly friendly country; but they had a large share in determining their policy, and, after a while, in steadying the country.

In July, 1875, the torch was applied to the combustible elements in the Turkish Empire by a partial revolt in Herzegovina, which did not appear at first to have more than local consequence. But such was the inefficiency of Turkish administration that the Porte

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was unable to cope, in an outlying province, with even so paltry a disturbance as this; and the fire, as the autumn advanced, spread till it embraced the whole of Bosnia as well as Herzegovina. Disraeli was anxious from the first, especially as the attitude of Austria, the neighbouring Great Power to the disturbed countries, with many Slav subjects of its own, was ambiguous. He desired that Turkey should herself deal with the situation, free from outside interference; and only consented reluctantly, as the revolt spread, to joint mediation by the consuls of the Great Powers on the spot. 'There is no alternative,' he telegraphed to Derby from Weston on August 24; 'but I don't like it.' Subsequent reflection confirmed him in this opinion. He wrote to Derby on June 13, 1876: 'The fact is, the original interference by the consuls was premature, and all the subsequent failures have been the consequence of that unripe interference.' Nothing, as might be expected, came of the consular efforts, save a profusion of paper promises by the Porte; and the insurgents continued to defeat the inadequate forces sent against them.

To Lady Bradford.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Aug.* 20, 1875.—. . . The affairs in European Turkey are anxious: I had four telegrams this morning. I do not think, however, matters are as serious as the newspapers make out. Now that Parliament is up, they want a sensation subject, and a little stock-jobbing is always welcome.

The moment I heard of the outbreak at all making head (I think it was the day before I went to Osborne; yes, the day of the last Cabinet and before the Fish Dinner) I conferred with Derby, and telegraphed to our Minister at Vienna to see Andrassy instantly and ascertain, if possible, his *real* wishes. Nothing cd. be more satisfactory than his reply, and if we were dealing with any one but the Turks, the failure of the insurrection wd. not only be certain, but immediate. If Austria is really neutral, or, as she professes, anxious to assist Turkey, it ought not to last, but the want of energy at Constantinople is superhuman. Tho' ruined in their finance, we have been always told that the Turks had,

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at least, created an army and a fleet, and both of a high class; but I only hear, after repeated appeals, from our Ambassador, that they have scraped together less than 2,000 men, and are sending them in slow-sailing merchant transports. They cd. not reach the scene of war, were it not for Austria. . . .

To Anne Lady Chesterfield.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Aug.* 21.—. . . This dreadful Herzegovina affair, wh. had there been common energy, or perhaps pocket-money even, among the Turks, might have been settled in a week.

To Lady Bradford.

BRETBY PARK, *Aug.* [*Sept.*] 6.—. . . The Herz. affair, and Danubian politics in general, are in a very unsatisfactory state. Andrassy is quite undecided, or playing a double game: perhaps both.

It is curious, but since the fall of France, who used to give us so much alarm and so much trouble, the conduct of foreign affairs for England has become infinitely more difficult. There is no balance, and unless we go out of our way to act with the three Northern Powers, they can act without us, wh. is not agreeable for a State like England. Nor do I see, as I have told you before, any prospect of the revival of France as a military puissance. She is more likely to be partitioned than to conquer Europe again.

When I entered political life, there were three Great Powers in danger—the Grand Signior of the Ottomans, the Pope of Rome, and the Lord Mayor of London. The last will survive a long time: but the fall of France has destroyed the Pope, and will, ultimately, drive the Turk from Europe. . . .

10, DOWNING STREET, *Sept.* 10.—. . . It is a strange thing that, at this moment, when so much is at stake, there is not a single Ambassador in England, and throughout the whole of the Danubian troubles, not one of Her Majesty's Ambassadors has been at his post. Sir A. Buchanan returned to Vienna only two days: the rest are at God knows what waters —probably Lethe. . . .

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *Friday* [*Oct.* 1].—. . . Ct. Andrassy says that, had it not been for *The Times* leaders, Herz. wd. have been settled. They think they indicate the English policy! They indicate the policy of stock-jobbers and idiots.

Fancy autonomy for Bosnia, with a mixed population: autonomy for Ireland wd. be less absurd, for there are more Turks in proportion to Xtians in Bosnia than Ulster *v.* the three other provinces. . . .

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The mixture of population and of creeds in these provinces rendered the problem, as Disraeli wrote, a most perplexing one. No part of the Balkan peninsula except Stamboul itself was more Turkish. Not only were there the customary horde of Turkish officials, but the owners of the soil, though Slav by race, were Moslems in religion and Turkish in political feeling. At the time of the Turkish conquest their ancestors, to save their property and privileges, 'abandoned their faith and embraced Mohammedanism, not only with discretion, but with zeal.'[1] Out of a population of some 1,100,000 nearly 400,000 seem to have been Mohammedans; and among the remainder, the Christian Slav population, the bulk of whom were peasants, there was an acute religious division, a quarter being Roman Catholics, and three-quarters belonging to the Orthodox Church. It was not a hopeful field for an experiment in autonomy.

Even the feeble efforts which the Porte had made to grapple with the insurrection had overtaxed finances weakened by a persistent course of misgovernment; and in October the situation was rendered immensely more complex and difficult by the Sultan's announcement that he could no longer pay the full interest on the public debt. Disraeli began to realise that the Eastern Question was reopened and that his opportunity in foreign affairs had come; and he girded up his loins to play, as the Prime Minister of Great Britain, a chief part on the international stage.

To Lady Bradford.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *Nov.* 3, 1875.—. . . Matters are large and pressing. Five weeks ago Russia, and indeed all the Great Powers, agreed 'the Herz. question was settled.' The Prince of Servia changed his Ministry, at their dictation, to ensure that result. But this extraordinary, and quite unforeseen, bankruptcy of the Porte has set everything again in flame, and I really believe 'the Eastern Question,' that has haunted Europe for a century, and wh. I thought the Crimean War had adjourned for half another, will fall to my lot to encounter—dare I say to settle?

[1] Marriott's *Eastern Question*, p. 282.

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Fortunately R. Bourke, Und.-Secy. for For. Affairs, is in town, and he comes and works with me.[1] I find him most intelligent, extremely well informed, and if not up in everything, knowing how to set about getting what is wanted. I have seen the Ambassadors: they know nothing, and flatter themselves that I believe they exercise only a wise reserve. The fact is their Governments don't inform them, and these Governments themselves are very puzzled. Beust is fantastical and dreamy, and keeps saying 'my only, and last, instructions from Andrassy were to co-operate with you.' I know privately that Andrassy changes his mind every week or day, and has half a doz. intrigues at work, wh. will defeat each other. As for the charming Schou[valoff], I am perfectly convinced that, instead of being a deep and *rusé* diplomat, he does not know the A.B.C. of his business, and is perfectly sincere in his frequent asseverations to that effect.

But the most amusing thing is the mystery of that tall Münster, while a confidl. despatch from Odo Russell this morning informs us that Bismarck remains in sullen solitude, and will see no one, or write or speak. The Emperor is so afraid of him that he dare not remonstrate with him; the Crown Prince has given up speaking to him on public matters, from pure weariness, while the great mass of the Court officials only dare mention the ineffable name in a whisper, and then look round, tho' Bis. is 100 miles away. The truth is, I have no doubt, he is watching for some misunderstanding betn. Russia and Austria, and then he will be communicative enough. . . .

Nov. 4, ½ *pt.* 6 *p.m.*—. . . Ld. Derby arrived last night at five o'ck., and came on to me immediately. He was with me two hours. We resolved not to bring the Turkish affairs at present before the Cabinet, but conduct them together.

The Cab. to-day was entirely on the Admy. scrapes.[2] I am satisfied with what we have done. . . .

At three o'ck. the King of Denmark came, and paid me a visit. It was rather inopportune, as I was rather tired and had to see Lord Saly. at four o'ck. on the affairs of Central Asia. . . .

Ld. Salisbury has just gone. And we have agreed to do, with respect to Central Asia, exactly as Lord Derby and myself had previously agreed to do about Turkey.

[1] Derby was at Knowsley, and Disraeli was seeing the foreign diplomatists, and dealing with urgent telegrams, on his behalf.

[2] See Vol. V., pp. 396-398.

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To Queen Victoria.

Nov. 6, 1875.—. . . Affairs in European Turkey, and in Central Asia, require constant thought and vigilance, but Mr. Disraeli has able colleagues in these matters, and thinks he knows well the tone which your Majesty would expect, and approve, that your Ministers should adopt. On Lord Mayor's Day Mr. Disraeli must say something, that will give the note of your Majesty's policy on these great matters. He will be cautious—but not timid. . . .

What Disraeli said at Guildhall was that, now that the financial catastrophe in Turkey had revived the struggle in Bosnia, it could not be denied that circumstances were critical. The Great Powers immediately interested, however, had exercised, and he believed would continue to exercise, a wise forbearance; and he was therefore convinced that peace would be maintained and the public opinion of Europe satisfied. But he significantly added that, though the interests of the Imperial Powers in this question were more direct, they were not more considerable than those of Great Britain; and 'those to whom the conduct of your affairs is now entrusted are deeply conscious of the nature and magnitude of those British interests, and those British interests they are resolved to guard and maintain.' The speech was well received at home and abroad.

To Lady Bradford.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *Nov.* 10, 1875.—. . . I think yesterday was very successful; at least everyone seems to think so. I had a great reception, and spoke pretty well. Wonderful how one can speak at all, after sitting for hours in a great glaring hall, amid the wassailing of a 1,000 guests, and seated between existing and ex-Lady Mayoresses! . . .

Nov. 13.—. . . You will be glad to hear that the Guildhall speech really effected all my purpose, and has been hailed by all parties: in short by the country.

In the hunting field yesterday—Vale of Aylesbury—the great Mr. Horsman, my 'superior person,' who always decries everything and everybody, gave it as his opinion that 'it was the greatest speech since Mr. Pitt.' But after all, what is to come? My speech is only *point de jour*: the day has

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hardly broken, and we shall probably have a flaming sun and a sultry sky. I hope our sixty years of peace have not been a Capua to us, and that the English people have yet some spirit. 'Live in a blaze and in a blaze expire!' wd. content me, but I won't be snuffed out. . . .

This Guildhall speech deserves especial attention. Disraeli, as we have seen, based the whole of his Near Eastern policy on the Treaty of Paris as modified by the Treaty of London; an absolutely impregnable position from the diplomatic standpoint. Now the history of both instruments shows that, internationally, this country, owing to her undoubted interests, had constantly asserted, and had been as constantly conceded, a powerful voice in any modification of the Eastern settlement. Yet when the question was reopened in 1875, the three Imperial Powers, Russia, Austria, and Germany—two of them, certainly, Turkey's nearest neighbours, and the third the dominant State in Europe—assumed from the first the right to take the lead in shaping European policy, in drafting international instruments. Neither Austria nor Prussia had fought when the matter was last brought, in the Crimean War, to the decision of arms, but Austria, though deeply interested, had then played an ambiguous, and Prussia an indifferent (or possibly treacherous) part. Nevertheless, these two Powers now affected to be the natural representatives, over against Russia, of the interests of Europe and of Turkey; not seeking, until after they had formulated their conclusions, for the adhesion of France, England, and Italy, who had poured out blood and treasure in the cause. It was, perhaps, reasonable to assume that Italy, whose participation in the Crimean War had been an astute move by Cavour to forward the unity of his country, had lost interest in the Eastern Question since that unity had been achieved; and unfortunately France, owing to the events of 1870 and 1871, was in no position to assert a claim to a leading voice. But the disregard of England was flagrant, and

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showed how, after a five years' experience of Gladstone, the estimate of her international weight had declined. Disraeli was not the man to put up with slighting treatment for his country; especially in a matter which, in his judgment, was of vital concern to her.

The Imperial Powers paid no attention this winter to Disraeli's hint that Great Britain's interests in the solution of the Eastern Question were as considerable as theirs. They had, as he admitted, a more 'immediate' and 'direct' interest; and, in view of the spread of the revolt and the increasing unrest in the neighbouring Slav provinces of Turkey, they consulted together, and made the Austrian Foreign Minister, Count Andrassy, the mouthpiece of their demands on the Porte. The Andrassy note pressed upon the Sultan a series of reforms, some of which he had already promised on paper to grant and of which others were, as a rule, in themselves desirable, and urged their immediate concession in act; otherwise the Powers could not continue to assist in the pacification of the disturbed districts. The note was despatched on December 30 to France, Italy, and Great Britain, with a request for their adherence. That adherence Disraeli hesitated to give.

To Lord Derby.

(*Telegram.*) HUGHENDEN, *Jan.* 9, 1876. 2.15.—Three considerations first strike me—

Firstly. Is Austria justified in sending a note advising measures which the Porte has, generally speaking, announced, with the exception of one or two points which are extremely vague, and which, so far as they are intelligible, would appear to be erroneous in principle and pernicious in practice?

Secondly. This would seem an act of imbecility or of treachery. It may begin in one and end in the other. In all probability it will have no effect upon existing circumstances; then Austria and Russia, who probably contemplate an ulterior policy or should do so, will turn round upon the other Powers and say, 'The advice you gave has been rejected, you are bound to see that it is carried into effect.'

Thirdly. Whether in the advice which we are asked to give Turkey, we are not committing ourselves to principles which are, or which may be soon, matter of controversy in

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our own country: for instance, the apportionment of local taxation to local purposes and the right of the peasantry to the soil.

These are three suggestions which occur to me, which should make us hesitate, but there are others. . . .

Confidential. (*Same day.*) I sent you, this morning, a figured telegram, conveying some of my impressions respecting the Austrian note. . . . I cannot resist expressing to you, by letter as well, my strong conviction, that we should pause before assenting to the Austrian proposal.

You know how great is my confidence in your judgment, and, therefore, you can better appreciate the hesitation wh. I feel in differing from the course wh. you recommend.

I think it will land us in a false position, and it would be preferable to appear isolated, wh. I usually deprecate, than, for the sake of a simulated union, wh. will not last many months, embarrass ourselves, when independent action may be necessary.

In declining to identify ourselves, as requested, with the note, is it necessary to appear as Turkish, or more Turkish, than the Turks? Could we not devise a course wh. might avoid that?

P.S.—I forgot to say, that the Great Lady wishes to see you, whom she rarely sees. Is this a complaint or a compliment?

Disraeli's hesitations were overcome, not by Derby's arguments, but by the direct request of the Porte, eager no doubt to agree with its adversaries quickly, and also glad to have a sincere friend to its independence and integrity sitting on the European Areopagus assembled for its reform.

To Lady Bradford.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *Jan.* 18.—. . . Our delay so alarmed Austria, who is afraid of Hungary, that Andrassy had offered all sorts of concessions to the Porte, provided the Porte wd. signify to England that the Porte wished us to join the other Powers. And, the day I was with D[erby], he expected this: and sure enough, yesterday Musurus brought it. We can't be more Turkish than the Sultan—*plus Arabe que l'Arabie.*

I think they have only postponed the crisis; wh. will happen in spring, I fancy. . . .

The Government, accordingly, in the words put into Her Majesty's mouth at the opening of Parliament in

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1876, considered it to be their duty 'not to stand aloof' from the action of the Imperial Powers; but they made it clear that, if they 'joined in urging on the Sultan the expediency of adopting such measures of administrative reform as may remove all reasonable cause of discontent on the part of his Christian subjects,' they intended to 'respect the independence of the Porte.' There was a general acceptance of the policy; but public opinion was as yet apathetic on the Turkish question, being concentrated on the Suez Canal purchase, the Anti-Slavery Circular, the Prince's Indian tour, and the augmentation of the Royal Title. A valuable memorandum[1] by Northcote on the Eastern Question shows the views expressed in Parliament by the leaders of Opposition.

Parliament approved our course, Lord Granville and Lord Hartington seeming a little jealous of our following the lead of Austria, and putting in a word on behalf of the 'independence of the Ottoman Empire,' Gladstone, on the other hand, cordially approving our acting with the other Powers, and expressing his hope that we were going seriously to press for Turkish reforms. I remember Disraeli's wondering what he meant by his rather curious speech, which at the moment seemed somewhat uncalled for; but it is worth looking back to as containing the germ of much that he has said since.

The acceptance by the Powers of the Andrassy note gave diplomacy a respite. The Porte, as usual, was profuse in promises; time must be given to see the outcome. In the interval of waiting, Bismarck, conscious of the entry of a disregarded Power into the diplomatic arena, made overtures to England for common action. After the threat to France in the preceding spring his proposals were naturally regarded with caution.

Lord Derby to Queen Victoria.

Feb. 10.—Lord Derby, with his humble duty, submits to your Majesty that he has received your Majesty's letter

[1] Several extracts from this memorandum, written after the close of the 1874-1880 Government, were printed in Chapter 14 of Andrew Lang's *Life of Sir Stafford Northcote*, published in 1890. Lord Iddesleigh has kindly sanctioned the use of further passages, which it would have been indiscreet to make public a generation ago.

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on the subject of the wish expressed by Prince Bismarck for free and unreserved interchange of ideas on Eastern affairs.

Lord Derby respectfully ventures to agree in the view taken by your Majesty of this offer: that it is one to be accepted, as the assistance of Prince Bismarck in carrying into effect English views on Eastern subjects might under certain circumstances be of incalculable value.

Lord Derby accordingly proposes to meet Prince Bismarck's overtures in the same spirit of cordial friendship between the two Governments in which they seem to be made. He must, however, bear in mind that more may be intended by this communication than meets the eye. He cannot possess implicit confidence in Prince Bismarck's desire of peace, remembering the events of last spring. And he would like to see more clearly than he does what assistance England is expected to give in return for that which is offered.

These necessary reservations need not, however, interfere with the reception of Prince Bismarck's proposal. If sincere, it cannot be too cordially met: if designs are kept in the background which may not be compatible with English interests, they will be most easily discovered by an apparent absence of all suspicion.

To Lord Derby.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, S.W., *Feb.* 15, '76.—I will not return the drt. despatch to Mr. V. Lister, but to yourself.

After reading it several times, I have not altered a word of yr. composition, for I find it is something that is wanting, not what is present, that jars a little on me. It ends with a matter of detail instead of closing with the chief theme, so that the effect is rather chilling.

You have to deal with a man who is dangerous, but who is sincere; and who will act straightforwardly with an English Minister whose sense of honor he appreciates; a man, too, very sensitive and impulsive.

The step he is now taking is one wh., I believe, he has long and often meditated, but he was piqued by our doctrinaire non-intervention, and all that.

I send a sketch of a concluding paragraph wh. you can adopt or alter, as you like.

[Sketch of concluding Parag.]

In conveying to you these remarks, I would, however, observe, that, tho' the fall of Count Andrassy and some other contingencies wh. I need not now dwell on, might be events, the tendency of which would certainly not be favorable to

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the maintenance of peace, still, if a concerted action on public affairs between Germany and England be established, as intimated by Prince Bismarck, and wh. wd. meet the views of H.M. Government and, as I believe, would be responded to by the feelings and convictions of both countries, the chances of so great a calamity as a general, or even considerable, war would, in my opinion, be infinitely reduced.

From Lord Derby.

Private. F. O. *F*[*eb.*] 15, '76.—I like your paragraph very well, but with your consent would prefer to make it, or the substance of it, into a separate draft. The draft sent to you was never intended as an answer to Bismarck's overtures, which I reserved until I could get from Russell an answer to questions put to him in a private letter, these questions being what you and I agreed upon.

The draft I sent you is a mere record of a conversation which took place, and which I thought it as well to set down. If you will let that go as it stands, I will supplement it in the way you suggest.

Even when drafted according to Disraeli's suggestions, Derby's reply to Bismarck's overtures did not prove to be sufficiently encouraging to detach the German Chancellor from his co-operation with Gortchakoff and Andrassy; and the Imperial Powers continued on their own way without taking any special account of this country. The Andrassy note produced as little effect as the consular intervention of the autumn. The revolt continued to spread; Serbia and Montenegro prepared to support their Slav brethren; and the situation was made more acute by the murder, early in May, of the French and German consuls at Salonika by Mohammedan rioters. These events moved Bismarck, Gortchakoff, and Andrassy to meet again, and draw up, mainly under Russian inspiration, fresh proposals at Berlin; while France and Germany sent ships of war to Salonika in order to exact punishment, and to secure their interests in the future.

To Lord Derby.

Confidential. HUGHENDEN MANOR, *April* 19, 1876.—. . . I say nothing about Turkish affairs. You are a younger man

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than yr. friend and correspondent, and will have eno' to do for the rest of yr. life in these matters.

April 20.—. . . Altho' I am not very surprised at the position of Turkish affairs, I confess there is something cynical about Gortchakoff's treatment, wh. I think is not exactly respectful to us, after his representations. But with no Russian Ambassador here, and a mere Polonius at St. Petersburg, it is difficult to ascertain with precision the situation.

The illimitable trust wh. all the Great Powers have in Andrassy, while, apparently, they do everything to counteract his efforts, would be amusing were it not so dangerous. . . .

May 8.—. . . It appears to me, that we are hardly taking as much advantage as we might of Bismarck's original overture to us. Odo writes, as if it were something that had happened in a dream.

We ought to have revived the feeling previous to the arrival of Gortchakoff and the Austrian, so that Bismarck shd. take no step with[ou]t apprising and consulting us.

If the projected understanding between Germany and us is only a mirage, the sooner we ascertain that the better.

Confidential. W[HITEHALL] G[ARDENS], *May* 15.—I must, I am sorry to say, again complain of the want of order and discipline in your office.

The Queen sent to me twice on Saturday to enquire, whether there was news from Berlin, and wrote to me on her point of departure, requesting that I wd. forward the expected information immediately.

I did not go to the German Embassy on Saturday, but I have since heard, that the communication made to the excluded Ambassadors was generally known there.

Nothing had reached me, and on Sunday morning, when the messenger went to Windsor, I had to inform the Queen that Her Majy's Govt. knew nothing.

At one o'ck. I received Odo Russell's tel., wh. left Berlin at 5 o'ck. on Saturday, and wh. ought to have been here before you left town!

I sent instantly to the 'Resident Clerk' for an explanation, and with an enquiry (to have in writing) at what hour the Berlin tel. reached him. The 'Resident Clerk' was not in residence!

I believe yr. office is very badly managed—the clerks attend there later, than any other public office, witht. the excuse of being worked at night as they were by Palmn.[1]

[1] There seems to be no doubt that the Foreign Office was at this period understaffed, so that at times of crisis the Permanent Under-Secretary of State and the clerks in the political departments were overworked. The staff was, accordingly, shortly afterwards enlarged.

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It is only a default at a most critical moment like the present, that the negligence becomes insufferable—and so one complains. I say nothing here of the contents of the tel., respecting wh. we can confer when you like.

The Queen complains that she never receives tels. direct; only in a bag when they are stale.

The Berlin memorandum, which reached Disraeli in the manner described in the last letter, contained proposals considerably in advance of the Andrassy note. An armistice of two months was to be insisted on, during which terms should be discussed between the Porte and the insurgents on the following basis: materials to be furnished by the Porte for the reconstruction of houses and churches destroyed; relief to be distributed in consultation with a mixed Commission representing both Christians and Mussulmans; Turkish troops to be concentrated, to avoid collisions; Christians as well as Mussulmans to retain arms; the consuls or delegates of the Powers to preside over the application of reforms. The importance of the memorandum, however, lay, not so much in these detailed suggestions, as in its conclusion that, if the armistice expired without the objects of the Powers being obtained, it would be necessary to reinforce diplomatic action by 'efficacious' measures. To Disraeli the detailed proposals appeared to be impracticable or injudicious, and the final threat, in which he recognised the hand of Russia, incompatible with the British policy of maintaining the integrity and independence of Turkey. He resented, moreover, on his country's behalf, the peremptory demand for immediate adhesion to proposals from the framing of which Great Britain had been excluded. He drafted a note embodying his views, and read it to the Cabinet on Tuesday, May 16. His manner, Northcote says, was of 'unusual solemnity,' and he spoke of the question as by far the most important that had come before the Cabinet since its formation. This was the note:

Most Confidentjal. 10, DOWNING ST., *May* 16, 1876.—Mr. Disraeli fears, that we are being drawn, step by step,

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into participating in a scheme, which must end very soon in the disintegration of Turkey.

Though we may not be able to resist the decision of the three Military Empires, he does not think that we ought to sanction, or approve, their proposals.

It is almost a mockery for them to talk of a desire, that the Powers should 'act in concert' and then exclude France, Italy, and England from their deliberations, and ask us by telegraph to say yes or no to propositions, which we have never heard discussed.

Moreover it is asking us to sanction them in putting a knife to the throat of Turkey, whether we like it or not.

Although the three Northern Powers have acted in a somewhat similar way twice during the last eight months, we had upon those two occasions no great difficulty in joining them, as we were asked to do so by the Porte.

Can we expect Turkey to make us the same request now? Mr. Disraeli thinks not, and that it would be impolitic for us to agree if she did, and for these five principal reasons:

(1) He believes it is impossible for the Sultan to reconstruct the houses and churches of the insurgents, or to find food for the refugees.

(2) The distribution of relief by means of such a Commission as that proposed, would be a huge system of indiscriminate almsgiving, totally beyond the power of the Porte to effect, and utterly demoralising to any country.

(3) The concentration of troops in certain places would be delivering up the whole country to anarchy, particularly when the insurgents are to retain their arms.

(4) The 'consular supervision' would reduce the authority of the Sultan to a nullity; and, without a force to support it, supervision would be impossible.

(5) The hope of restoring tranquillity by these means being, in Mr. Disraeli's opinion, groundless, we should then be asked to 'join in taking more efficacious measures in the interests of peace,' which, it is supposed, means taking more efficacious measures to break up the Empire.

In Mr. Disraeli's opinion it would be far better for Turkey to give up Bosnia and Herzegovina altogether, as Austria gave up Italy, than to acquiesce in the new proposals, and it would also be better for us that she should do so, than adopt the alternative now offered.

He would say, if Turkey agrees, we are ready to recommend an armistice and a European Conference based upon the territorial *status quo*.

One word as to the first part of the project which was not

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even alluded to in the telegram from Berlin. He thinks that we ought to take care that neither we, nor any other Power, send ships of war to Constantinople on the pretence of protecting the Christians.

But above all it is taking a leap in the dark to act in this matter before we know what Turkey herself thinks of the new programme, and it would seem that we may fairly tell the three Northern Powers that a general concert cannot be attained by the course they are adopting.

The Cabinet came to a unanimous decision not to adhere to the Berlin proposals; and telegrams to this effect were immediately despatched to the Ambassadors abroad. In one respect the policy recommended by Disraeli to his colleagues was almost immediately modified. Lest the fanaticism, which had broken out at Salonika, should spread to Constantinople, the British fleet was ordered on May 24, not indeed to Constantinople, but to Besika Bay, just outside the Dardanelles, as a measure of precaution. The orders were given on representations received from the diplomatic body at Constantinople, and other nations took similar action.

Gladstone and others have maintained that the refusal to adopt the Berlin memorandum was the initial mistake of the Government; that it broke up the Concert of Europe, and encouraged the Porte to rely on the support of Great Britain against pressure from the Powers on behalf of the oppressed Christian nationalities. If so, hardly anyone in England except Gladstone himself objected to it at the time. The action of the Government was accepted as a prudent and dignified course by the country and by the leaders of Opposition. Hartington, as already noted, said on June 9, 'I do not believe there exists in the country any distrust of the proceedings of Her Majesty's Government.' And Granville not only expressed, on June 26, provisional approval of the non-adherence to the Berlin memorandum, but also, after two months' reflection, said on July 31, the day on which Gladstone attacked Ministers in the House of Commons on this very point: 'I agree that it would not

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have been wise to accede to that document. . . . As a whole it was not acceptable.' The only question that was raised here at the time—and it was raised both in Cabinet and in Parliament—was whether it would not have been advisable for England to put forward an alternative, or at least to have advocated the calling of a Conference or Congress. The idea of a Conference was constantly before Disraeli's mind, to be convened at the proper moment. When it was suggested before the end of May by the Queen, who was at first uneasy about the rejection of the memorandum, he replied that the idea was excellent but premature. 'There has been a full meal, and a little digestion is required.' As to alternative proposals generally, there was force in his argument in Parliament on July 31, that there would have been little chance of their acceptance by three Great Powers who had just given all their intelligence and influence to the production of their own scheme for settlement.

> Their self-love, their just pride, their somewhat mortified feeling at the course which we had taken, all would have impelled them to reject our proposition. And my own opinion is that it is not a wise thing for a country, and a country like England, to make proposals which it has not the means of carrying into effect, and to sketch a policy, which is never difficult to do, but which a country like this ought certainly not to entertain unless it entertained it in a serious, practical, and determined manner.

But, if no serious objection was raised at home to Disraeli's policy, undoubtedly England's refusal to endorse the Berlin memorandum surprised and disturbed the European chanceries, accustomed as they had become to take their cue from Bismarck. France and Italy, who had themselves hastened to accept, forwarded remonstrances. Lord Odo Russell telegraphed from Berlin that the refusal would have 'serious consequences,' and followed up his telegram by letters to the same effect. Disraeli was not impressed. 'Whatever is done now,' he wrote to Derby on May 18, 'the consequences will probably be

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serious.' And on May 29, 'I do not like Lord Odo's letter, or anything, so far as I can gather, he has done. He was not originally justified in offering his personal opinion, that our Government would accept the Russian note—an unheard-of step! . . . He does not seem even now to comprehend the situation. I have myself no doubt that, if we are stiff, we shall gain all our points, because no one is really adverse to them, except Russia.'

The immediate course of events seemed to justify Disraeli's confidence. The Sultan Abdul Aziz, whose half-insane extravagance had been largely responsible for Turkey's internal and external difficulties, was deposed on May 29 by a palace revolution in favour of his nephew Murad; a deposition followed by the expected, if not arranged, suicide. As the *coup d'état* had been, in great part, the work of Midhat Pasha, who had a programme of constitutional reform and of friendly co-operation with foreign Powers, and especially with England, and as the new Sultan made similar professions, there was little difficulty in persuading the three Empires to withdraw the memorandum. Disraeli was accordingly able to announce in the House of Commons on June 9, 'There is a complete understanding between us and the Great Powers that there should be no undue pressure put upon the new Sovereign of Turkey; that he and his counsellors should have time to mature their measures.' All the Powers, he added, were agreed in affording the new Sultan immediate recognition. In fact, England's isolation was over; her policy had prevailed. 'Derby gets much credit, but he has needed pressure,' wrote Hardy in his diary for June 9. 'Disraeli has really been the mainspring.'

Disraeli's letters, just before and after the *coup d'état* at Constantinople, show the anxieties which weighed upon him, owing to the disorders in Turkey, Russia's suspicious policy, and the presence in Turkish waters of British and foreign ships of war. He never forgot how a policy of drift landed us in the Crimean War, and

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determined that we should preserve a clear and straight course now. 'Whatever happens,' he wrote to Lady Chesterfield on May 29, 'we shall certainly not drift into war, but go to war, if we do, because we intend it, and have a purpose which we mean to accomplish. I hope, however, Russia, at the bottom of the whole affair, will be sensible, and then we shall have peace.'

To Lord Derby.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, S.W., *May* 25, '76.—As the Ambassador[1] and Admiral[2] have come together naturally, without any intimation from us, I think we had better wait and learn the results of this spontaneous conference before we trouble them any further.

I am well satisfied with what we have done since Monday—and so far as I can judge, or learn, public opinion ratifies our course.

10, D. S., *May* 28.—. . . We must remember what is taking place in the Turkish waters is unprecedented. All the navies of Europe assembled: two of Powers never before known, and England with a novel force which she has never tried in battle; while at Constantinople itself there is in numbers a formidable fleet, but without ammunition and without crews.

These Turkish waters have been the frequent scene of *coups de main*. Even in our own time, among others, we have the abduction of the fleet by Egypt, Unkiar Skelessi, and Sinope.

The Turkish fleet is at present, in everybody's mind, a prize the possession of which may influence the fate of nations. The imminent danger—*i.e.*, a few weeks ago—was in my opinion from the side of the Bosphorus. Had Ignatieff succeeded in inducing the frightened Sultan to admit a Russian garrison and place his fleet under the guardianship of Russia, the difficulties would have been great. It is to be hoped that the personal influence of our Ambassador acting on changed circumstances may prevent any repetition of such efforts, if, as is believed, they were ever made.

The danger from the Dardanelles is of another kind. The Treaty of 1841 must not be violated. That should be a cardinal principle with us. But, if violated, there is but little compensation to be found in the consciousness that we have made a protest.

[1] Sir Henry Elliot. [2] Sir Geoffrey Phipps Hornby.

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What if secret instructions were given to the Admiral that if any of the naval forces assembled propose to violate the Treaty of 1841 he should warn them that it must be on their responsibility and that he is instructed to maintain that Treaty by force ?

Before we decide on anything, it might be as well to hear the result of the interview between the Ambassador and the Admiral. After all, at a conjuncture like the present almost everything depends on the Ambassador. He must not depend too much on his instructions; he must rely on good information, on his own quickness of perception, resolution, and fertility of resource.

May 31.—Elliot tells us nothing as to who brought all this[1] about. It is always one man who does these things. It ought to have been Elliot himself, but that I fear is not the case.

What will happen ? Until we know we can hardly, I fear, shape our course. If the Turks were to establish 'a Constitution,' they would go up in the market of Europe, which is always liberal, and perhaps get a new loan.

But pray think of our last conversation as to possible Congress. I feel convinced it is the only practical solution in the long run. Conference or Congress on the basis of *status quo ;* admitting creation of new vassal States, but *sine qua non*, no increase of the territory of any existing vassal State. If Bismarck agrees to this, the affair is finished and for a generation.

I am very anxious about Besika Bay and its contents.

Instructions as I intimated mean, you say, 'war.'

That depends entirely on the men instructed. With a competent Ambassador and Admiral it should mean *peace* not *war*.

The Ambassador and Admiral under existing circumstances must be in confidential communication with the other envoys and commanders, and it is their principal duty to make these colleagues aware of contingencies.

Instructions may lead to war, but non-instructions may bring about catastrophes. Witness Navarino! The circumstances were very similar, and the British Admiral was left entirely without instructions.

To Lady Bradford.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *June* 6, 1876.—. . . I can say nothing about affairs, wh. no one can penetrate at this moment. I will only say that I see not the slightest cause of regret for

[1] The *coup d'état* at Constantinople.

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the course I have taken. It requires calmness, wh. no one I have to deal with possesses in an eminent degree, except Derby, who takes things coolly enough: but I am not so sure of his firmness as of his salutary apathy. However, I think we shall do, and that Prince Gortchakoff has found out by this time that he is not always to have his own way. . . .

June 7.—. . . We have not had much leisure here, for tels. from all quarters of the globe are showered on us, but one can bear it when things go well. I like the look of things, and shd. not be surprised if I accomplished exactly, and entirely, all I intended. That ought to satisfy a man.

But the stakes are high. Generally speaking, there is no gambling like politics; but when you have to deal only with Emperors and High Chancellors, and Empires are on the main, the excitement, I suppose, a little increases. . . .

Breathe nothing to any human being of my general feeling as to affairs, except of course to B[radford], who is, always, I know, discreet. . . .

To Lord John Manners.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *June* 7, '76.—. . . It is a source of great satisfaction to me, that you are with the Queen at this trying moment. It is of the last importance, that H.M. should have with her a trusty counsellor and a man of the world, and one who possesses my entire confidence.

I see nothing to regret in the course we have followed; indeed much the reverse.

The refusal to sanction the Berlin note: the sending the Queen's fleet to the Turkish waters: the friendly warning to the Governments of the assembled navies to remember and respect treaties: all this forms a policy of determination, and yet is consistent with a sincere love of peace, which, I believe, it will secure.

I look upon the tripartite confederacy to be at an end. It was an unnatural alliance, and never would have occurred had England maintained, of late years, her just position in public affairs.

I think not only peace will be maintained, but that Her Majesty will be restored to her due and natural influence in the government of the world. . . .

In spite of Odo Russell's forebodings, the independent line taken by the British Government only strengthened Bismarck's respect for Disraeli and his Cabinet.

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To Lady Bradford.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, *June* 13, 1876.—. . . The great man at Berlin has completely realised my expectations. He is in the highest spirits and good humor. He delights in the whole affair, and particularly praised 'Disraeli's speeches' to Odo Russell, 'and his sending the fleet to the Dardanelles!' and then he fell into a fit of laughing at Gortchakoff—but I think I must tell you to burn this letter: at any rate, I will stop my pen.

Schou. was with Lord Derby yesterday, as I had arranged—and they had a very interesting conversation. I think things look as well as possible; but we must be prepared yet for stranger vicissitudes and trials of our mettle. So much the better! These are politics worth managing. . . .

To Anne Lady Chesterfield.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *June* 18.—It is not very easy, dear darling, to write letters when one's mind is entirely absorbed, and with an awful weight of responsibility on one's shoulders: so that Lord Derby said to me yesterday, that he cd. scarcely attend to general business, and really thought at all times of only one subject. You say 'everybody is at my feet.' Yes! it may be so—but the thing is to keep them there. Gortchakoff won't give up his game easily. I see before me a period of great danger, agitation, and difficulty. I am pretty well, and if I cd. save myself from those terrible late nights in the H. of Commons shd. be able, perhaps, to guide the ship a little longer. . . .

Representations were constantly reaching the Queen during the last week of May and the early weeks of June from the Emperor William, the Crown Princess, and the Crown Prince, to the effect that Berlin had no special interest in the Eastern Question, and only co-operated with St. Petersburg and Vienna in virtue of an agreement between the three Empires in 1872, under which all important political questions were to be discussed, as far as possible, *à trois*; that Germany under Bismarck was anxious for co-operation with England; that, if England would give the lead, Germany would follow. Disraeli, at the Queen's request, sent her this letter, describing British policy, to be forwarded to the Crown Prince:

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To Queen Victoria.

June 18, 1876.—Mr. Disraeli . . . has read with deep interest the letter of the Crown Prince. Mr. Disraeli will say at once, simply and clearly, that your Majesty's Ministers are ready and willing to act with Prince Bismarck. They have endeavoured to convey that wish and resolution on their part frequently, and as they thought unmistakably, to His Highness. It is not to encourage controversy, when he wishes to lay the foundation of permanent and powerful co-operation, that Mr. Disraeli ventures to observe that, if Prince Bismarck is so anxious for these ends, it is to be regretted that he should have joined in the Berlin note without even stipulating that England should have a voice in the matter.

However, this is not a reproach: only a remark. Ready to act with Prince Bismarck, Mr. Disraeli would observe that, at this particular moment, your Majesty's Ministers have nothing to propose in the way of pacificatory measures. All have agreed that the new Sultan must have time to negotiate with the insurgents, and, if he fail, and they persist in continuing the struggle with the avowed object of achieving their independence, Mr. Disraeli does not see what kind of mediation is possible. We can in that case only see that there is fair play. . . .

Derby, a couple of days later, explained in more detail the policy which he and Disraeli were pursuing. The language in which he described the extreme difficulties of England's diplomatic situation recalls the terms of Disraeli's letter to Lady Bradford of September 6 in the previous autumn.[1]

Lord Derby to General Ponsonby.

F. O., *June* 20, 1876.—I quite agree—if I may venture to say so—in the view which Her Majesty takes of the existing state of things. We shall have to be on our guard against appearing as the supporters of Turks against Christians in the East. This is the danger, and neither Mr. Disraeli nor I are blind to it. All we have done, and all we ought to do, is to see fair play. We are very far from being out of the difficulty: indeed if the report be true that the Prince of Servia has asked for the Governorship of Bosnia, the real troubles are just about to begin. The demand is so absurd that it can be put forward only as an excuse for a quarrel;

[1] See above, p. 13.

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and I doubt whether even Russian influence could prevent war, if it were made and refused.

I agree that we ought to have no antagonism with Russia. I do not believe the Czar or his responsible advisers desire to break up the Turkish Empire at present.

But the conduct of their agents in all places is absolutely at variance with the language held at Petersburg: showing either great duplicity or great administrative weakness. I believe in the existence of both, but more especially of the latter. I am as anxious as anyone to keep well with the Russians, but there is no acting with people when you cannot feel sure that they are telling truth.

In one word; I assent to everything contained in your letter, and am, and have been, endeavouring to follow the line which it indicates.

But the difficulties are many: not the least being the impossibility of relying on any one outside England.

Andrassy does not know his own mind for a week together. Bismarck wants us just now, but he is not exactly the person whom one can implicitly confide in: what I think of the Russian policy has been said above: France will do whatever Russia wishes. It is scarcely possible for us to be too cautious.

The steadiness and independence of British policy under Disraeli and Derby, the general support it received at home, and the tendency of Bismarck to rally to it, were not without their effect on Russia, and she showed herself disposed to moderate, or at least minimise, her own designs and those of her Balkan *protégés*.

To Lord Derby.

Confidential. 2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *June* 24, '76.—I met Schou. last night at dinner, and he got me in a corner before he went to Beust's Ball.

He was full of matter: clear, for him calm, and not at all claret-y. This is the upshot, wh. I thought you ought to know.

The affairs must be settled: there must be a thoro' good understanding between Eng. and Russia. The despatch was one of *confiance* and *bon vouloir*. This he repeated often: at last, he asked me whether I did not think it so? Obliged to speak, I said I cd. not doubt it, but he must admit, that with all its *confiance*, etc., it suggested, or proposed, a great deal.

'Really,' he replied, 'not more than, we believe, you wish

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and is for your interest. But, if you disapprove, propose yourselves and we will follow you.'

Now this is the important part.

'England is under a false impression about autonomy: we do not propose, or wish, a military or political autonomy; only an administrative one. The Sultan may have his troops, his fortresses, his political officers, provided the people may manage their own affairs.

'As for Montenegro, it has got about that Russia is intriguing for a port under the pretence of increasing the territory of Montenegro. No such thing: we renounce the idea, Montenegro need have no port, only a little garden to grow cabbages and potatoes. We do not care for Servia as we do for Montenegro, but what Servia wants is not much: and I believe the Sultan has more than once been on the point of granting what they wish.' . . .

To Queen Victoria.

H. OF C., *June* 29, '76.—Mr. Disraeli . . . has the honor to acknowledge the receipt, forwarded by General Ponsonby, of the copy of a letter from H.R.H. the Princess Louis of Hesse, dated the 27th of June, on which Mr. Disraeli ventures to make one or two observations.

With respect to the remark that His Imperial Majesty and Prince Gortchakoff appear surprised that England, always so philanthropic, has no sympathy to assist the oppressed Christians, Mr. Disraeli would observe that the probable cause of the comparative coolness of the English people, and certainly of your Majesty's Government, in this respect, arises from the fact that they are in possession of incontestable evidence that the so-called insurgents are not natives of any Turkish province but are simply an invasion of revolutionary bands, whose strength lay in the support afforded to them by Servia and Montenegro, acting on the instigation of foreign agents and foreign committees. All this is evident from the report of your Majesty's Consuls, who are, Mr. Disraeli believes, without exception, men whose general sympathies are in favor of the Christian population. With regard to the alleged 'extremely anti-Russian feelings' of Sir H. Elliot, your Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople appears to Mr. Disraeli to be a man of great calmness of judgment and feeling, and free from prejudice. Indeed for some time, Mr. Disraeli rather apprehended that Sir Henry was too much under the influence of the Russian Ambassador, with whom, Mr. Disraeli has heard, he was intimate and maintained confidential relations. . . . Mr. Disraeli trusts

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that the despatch of Lord Derby, in reply to that of Count Schouvaloff, which Mr. Disraeli is at this moment revising, will remove any misconception from the minds of the Emperor and his distinguished Minister; that they will feel that their views are fully appreciated by your Majesty's Government, and that your Majesty's Ministers are prepared to co-operate with them, in every legitimate effort, not only to secure the peace of Europe, but to improve the condition of the Christian subjects of the Porte.

If the Russian Government was ready to co-operate loyally with the other Powers, there was hope that the war which Serbia and Montenegro were threatening would be prevented. Even if it broke out, as Northcote wrote in his memorandum, 'it was pretty sure to end in [Servia's] defeat if she were not secretly supported by a stronger Power. The great object was, therefore, to bring the influence of the Powers to bear on Servia to induce her to keep the peace.' Disraeli was ready to use strong measures with this object.

To Lord Derby.

Confidential. 2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, S.W., *June* 28, '76. —If war takes place between Turkey and Servia, and the Porte is victorious, and seeks the legitimate consequences of victory, as, for example, the restoration of Belgrade, it shd. at once be distinctly signified to Russia, that if Russia interfere under these circumstances, the position of affairs will be considered by England as most grave.

Servia will not move, unless she is confident that Russia will step in, in case of Servia being worsted, and so save her from the consequences of her headstrong audacity.

At present, it's heads I win, tails you lose.

If this declaration, on our part, is simultaneously accompanied by a determined effort to detach Montenegro from Servia, war will not take place—but this decided course ought to be taken to-day. Even hours are precious.

The efforts of the Powers were unsuccessful. Serbia declared war on Turkey on June 30; Montenegro followed on July 1. But, though there was anxiety both in the Ministry and in the country, the general lines of British policy commanded confidence abroad and at home. A deputation headed by Bright waited on Derby at the

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Foreign Office on July 14, and assured him that there was no disposition to suspect or blame the Government. All that was wanted was strict neutrality, except so far as it might be possible to interpose friendly offices to bring the fighting to an end—a policy entirely in harmony with Derby's own feeling. The Government would see fair play, he said. 'We undertook, undoubtedly,' he added, 'twenty years ago, to guarantee the Sick Man against murder, but we never undertook to guarantee him against suicide or sudden death.' Disraeli's letters show his confidence, coupled with his disgust at what he conceived to be the unjustifiable action of Serbia.

To Anne Lady Chesterfield.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *July* 9, 1876.—. . . I am sanguine enough to believe that, before the month terminates, the infamous invasion of the Servians will have been properly punished. All the Great Powers, Russia included, seem anxious to defer to England, and something like the old days of our authority appear to have returned.

To Lady Bradford.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *July* 13.—. . . As the Emperors have now entirely adopted our policy of non-interference and neutrality, I am in great hope that the insurrection may be soon subdued, and some tolerable settlement brought about. . . .

To Queen Victoria.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *July* 31.—. . . This is a terrible day of labor and some anxiety, as we have the Eastern debate to-night, and it is said that Mr. Gladstone is going to make one of his greatest efforts against your Majesty's Government, although his party have refused to support him in a vote of censure. . . .

To Lady Bradford.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *Aug.* 1.—Last night went off very well. It was to have been an adjourned debate, and a great attack on Ministers, but Granville and Hartington were too sensible to indulge Gladstone's vagaries, and he so impetuous that he rose the first night, wh. gave me an opportunity to follow him; and the affair then collapsed, as I wd. not, nor could not, give them another day, as they declined

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bringing forward a vote of censure. I did not speak at all to my own satisfaction, wanting energy, and therefore fluency, and clearness and consecutiveness of ideas, but it did well enough, as I got out my principal thoughts, and the latter part, not ill-reported, will be read by the country, I hope profitably. . . .

Disraeli was justified in the satisfaction which he expressed about this debate on July 31—the final debate of the Session upon the general Eastern policy. 'I have no desire,' said Hartington at its close, 'to place upon record any condemnation of the conduct of the Government. I think that in the main the policy which they have adopted is right, although I may have had objections to the means they may have adopted to carry out that policy.' Gladstone had been the only prominent speaker who was definitely hostile; and he had combined a defence of the Crimean War with a criticism of the rejection of the Berlin memorandum, and a demand for 'prompt action' which should at once preserve the territorial integrity of Turkey and promote the free local government of the subject races. The latter part of Disraeli's reply, on which he relied for the enlightenment of the country, was as follows:

I believe that the Governments of Russia and Austria have from the first . . . sincerely and unreservedly endeavoured to terminate these disturbances in Turkey. They felt that it was their interest to do so, and they have been most anxious to maintain the *status quo*. But, unfortunately, the world consists not merely of Emperors and Governments, it consists also of secret societies and revolutionary committees; and secret societies and revolutionary committees have been unceasingly at work in these affairs, and they do bring about in an Empire like Turkey most unexpected consequences, which may have a most injurious effect on British interests.

When we are told that we sent our fleet to the Dardanelles in order to maintain the Turkish Empire, I deny it. . . . The Turkish Government were never deceived on that point. . . . They were told they must reform their course and conduct; they must fulfil their engagements and obligations; and that our arrival in their waters was to maintain the

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interests of England and the British Empire, not to bolster up any Power that was falling into decrepitude from its own weakness.

The Turkish Government is engaged at this moment in a civil war . . .; but I cannot say that I have seen any cause at present why we should suddenly interfere. The right hon. gentleman used the expression 'prompt interference'; but at the same time he tells us he has nothing himself to propose. . . . In my opinion, it would be in the long run a very unsatisfactory interference if you did not know when you interfered what you intended, what you wished to accomplish. Her Majesty's Government have shown no disposition to avoid the liabilities which are attached to a great country like England, and which she must not shrink from. I am perfectly aware of our duties, not merely arising from treaties into which the country has entered, but the duties generally which we owe to civilisation; you cannot, however, settle these things by making speeches at public meetings. . . .

We have said from the first that we were in favour of non-interference; we have said from the first that we should observe a strict neutrality if that strict neutrality were observed by others. There has been a difference of opinion between us and the other Powers; there has been some controversy; in what has it all ended? It has all ended by the other Powers adopting our policy. . . . When I am told by the right hon. gentleman that we have lost our position in the European Concert, I am bound to say that is not the opinion of Her Majesty's Government. I believe the other Powers are most ready and prepared to act with us. . . .

The course which we have taken is the one which we believe we were called upon to pursue for the sake of our interests and for the sake of our Empire; it was the course which, in the second place, we were called upon to pursue because we believed it was most conducive to the maintenance of peace; and thirdly, also, the one which we believed would lead to the progressive improvement of the population of the Turkish Empire. If there is to be nothing but confusion, if we are to have nothing but struggles and war, if secret societies and revolutionary committees are to ride rampant over those fair provinces, I shall cordially deplore such a result as much as gentlemen who attack me very often for my want of sympathy with the sufferers by imaginary atrocities. . . .

When the occasion arrives we shall be ready to take our responsible part in what I hope may be the pacification of these countries, their advancement in civilisation, and their general improvement.

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The hostile amendment was withdrawn without being exposed to the risks of a division; Parliament accepted, without serious question, the general Eastern policy of the Government. Salisbury was justified in writing to Disraeli on July 27: 'It is quite evident, from the quiescence of Parliament and the country on the subject, that very general confidence is felt in the present conduct of our foreign policy; and in the shaping of that policy, the largest share is generally, and justly, attributed to you.'[1]

[1] See Vol. V., p. 494.

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CHAPTER II.

The Bulgarian Atrocities.

1876.

The general Eastern policy of the Government was accepted; but before the debate of July 31 a side-issue had arisen, which was for some months largely to obscure the main question, and to deflect the opinions and action of men and parties, and even of nations. The unrest in European Turkey had spread before the close of April to Bulgaria, where an insurrection broke out which began with a massacre of the local Turkish officials, and which, as it was the outcome of a wide-spread conspiracy, fomented from beyond the frontier, might well have proved formidable. It was in the mountainous district round Philippopolis, in the country afterwards known as Eastern Rumelia, that this uprising occurred; not, as before, in the remote north-western corner of the Turkish Empire in Europe, but in a central province on the highway to the West. The Porte, with Bosnia and Herzegovina in revolt, and Serbia and Montenegro threatening war, determined to protect its armies from a flank attack by the ruthless suppression of the Bulgarian insurgents. Not only was a considerable force of regular Turkish troops employed, but, before their arrival, irregulars, Bashi-bazouks and Circassians, who were already settled in the country, were armed and let loose upon a mostly unarmed peasantry, committing on them terrible atrocities. The massacres and outrages which had marked the insurrection were avenged a hundredfold. Thousands perished and many villages were ravaged and destroyed. Peculiarly heinous

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atrocities were perpetrated at the hill town of Batak; every house in it was burnt, and five thousand people were slaughtered, neither age nor sex being spared.

These events took place in the first three weeks of May; but only very inadequate reports reached Ministers or the British public. There was no British consul at Philippopolis, the centre of disturbance; the worst horrors were perpetrated in secluded townships in the Balkan and Rhodope mountains; and such information as filtered through to Constantinople and London came either by way of Adrianople, over a hundred miles off, or from Rustchuk on the Danube, in the extreme north of the country. To what extent Sir Henry Elliot, the British Ambassador in Constantinople, was ill served, and to what extent he was deficient in energy and initiative, may be open questions; but he certainly failed to bring home to Downing Street at the time the terrible nature of the Turkish atrocities. The first detailed account appeared in the *Daily News* of June 23, a month or more after the perpetration of the crimes. It was a most lurid story, decorated with extravagant particulars which it was difficult for the judicious to believe, and which turned out eventually to be serious exaggerations.

Disraeli, with his wide knowledge of men and things, was well aware how stories of this sort tended to exaggeration; and he had shown at the time of the Indian Mutiny how sceptical in this respect was his habit of mind. That ferocity had been manifested both in the rising and in the suppression was certain from the whole history of warfare in the Balkan highlands. But he might reasonably suppose that, had the horrors perpetrated been out of the common even for that wild country, he would have received from Constantinople more detailed reports. The *Daily News*, founded in the forties, and at first edited by Charles Dickens, had won for itself by the seventies an honourable reputation; but Disraeli was not so much alive to this as to the fact that it was the leading Liberal organ, which had throughout been

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particularly hostile to himself and devoted to Gladstone. 'They appear,' he wrote of the horrors to Lady Bradford on July 13, 'in that journal alone, which is the real Opposition journal, and, I believe, are, to a great extent, inventions. But their object is to create a cry against the Government.' When he was questioned in the House of Commons on June 26, he said that undoubtedly there had been great ferocity shown on both sides, but that the information which the Government had received did not justify the statements made in the *Daily News*. That journal, however, continued to publish horrifying details, which were confirmed in a measure by *The Times* and from other quarters. When questioned again on July 10, Disraeli maintained substantially the same position.

With respect to the reports of the terrible atrocities to which the right hon. gentleman has referred, I would still express a hope that, when we become better informed—I would express this hope for the sake of human nature itself—when we are thoroughly informed of what has occurred, it will be found that the statements are scarcely warranted. . . . Sir Henry Elliot is not a man to be insensible to such terrible proceedings. On the contrary, he is a stern assertor of humanity, and I know no man who would more firmly and energetically interfere if he were aware of events such as those to which the right hon. gentleman has referred. . . . That there have been proceedings of an atrocious character in Bulgaria I never for a moment doubted. Wars of insurrection are always atrocious. These are wars not carried on by regular troops—in this case not even by irregular troops—but by a sort of *posse comitatus* of an armed population. We know in our own experience that one of our Colonies, an ancient colony of England—Jamaica—was the scene of transactions and of a panic which always accompanies insurrection, which no one can look back upon without horror. I cannot doubt that atrocities have been committed in Bulgaria; but that girls were sold into slavery, or that more than 10,000 persons have been imprisoned, I doubt. In fact, I doubt whether there is prison accommodation for so many, or that torture has been practised on a great scale among an Oriental people who seldom, I believe, resort to torture, but generally terminate their connection with culprits in a more expeditious manner.

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At these last words there was a laugh in the House, always expectant of some humorous sally in the Prime Minister's utterances. A most unscrupulous use was made of this incident by the baser and more uncritical among his opponents. Over and over again in the next few months it was asserted that Disraeli, one of the most humane and tender-hearted of men, was so cynical as to make a public jest of unspeakable horrors inflicted by the Turks upon their Christian victims. All he meant to say, though he unfortunately employed sonorous Disraelian language, was that he could not believe the detailed accounts of the *Daily News*. Northcote has told us that he was sitting next his chief at the time he spoke, 'and heard him say to himself rather angrily, "What is there to laugh at?"'[1]

Disraeli, in this matter of the Bulgarian atrocities, had reason to complain, not merely of indifferent information supplied from Constantinople, but also of a carelessness in the Foreign Office, which did not see that he was provided with such information as it had.

To Lord Derby.

Confidential. 2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *July* 14, '76.—I must again complain of the management of your office, and request your personal attention to it.

It is impossible to represent F. O. in the House of Commons, in these critical times, with[ou]t sufficient information. What I receive is neither ample, nor accurate.

[1] The following is an example of the latitude which clerical agitators permitted themselves to use in this controversy. The High Church Bishop of Bombay, Dr. Mylne, preaching in his Cathedral on Sept. 24, 1876, said: 'A pitiful sneer about exaggeration, a wretched jest about the murderous proclivities of those whom to our shame we call allies, is the response of the Premier of England to the wail of Christian Turkey. There was an England once, my friends, that would have brooked no cynical buffoonery in the man who directed her policy, when the question was the burning of homesteads and the ravishing of women.' Called to account by Corry, the Bishop replied on Dec. 3: 'The grounds on which I then felt warranted in making these charges . . . do not appear to me after an interval of two months to have been such that I can plead them in justification of my words. . . . I have no course open to me but to ask Lord Beaconsfield to accept such amends as can be made by my expression of regret. I should use the word "apology" instead of "expression of regret" had my original words been uttered in any other place than the pulpit.'

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After I had made the declarations, wh. I did on yr. authority, respecting the Bulgarian 'atrocities,' I find a despatch from our Consul at Rustchuk, received, if I remember right, on the 28th June, and which reached me a fortnight afterwards, wh., if it do not confirm them as facts, refers to them as rumors, wh. are probable, and refers to them in some detail.

Last night Mr. Baxter gave notice of a question to be put on Monday to me—whether the Bulgarian outrages, referred to in the *Daily News*, were not regularly communicated, at the time, by our Consul at Adrianople, and whe[the]r our Ambassador at Const. had not consequently remonstrated with the Turkish Govt.

This was pretty well giving me the lie in the Ho. of Commons, and under ordinary circumstances, I shd. have at once risen, and not waited for Monday for the reply. But I have no confidence what[eve]r in yr. office, and I was obliged to submit in silence to the indignity, and, for ought I know, Monday may increase the pain of my position.

When Consul Reade's report reached Disraeli, he did not think it afforded sufficient ground for crediting the extravagant details of the newspaper correspondents:

A Consul hears, and no doubt truly, that there has been some extremely wild work on the part of some of the Bashi-bazouks, and he engages someone to go to a coffee-house frequented by these ruffians, where he listens to the reports of the wild work that has been going on. One present says, '5,000 or 6,000 must have perished innocently,' when another answers, 'If you had said 25,000 or 26,000 you would have been more correct,' as if exulting in the carnage. Now we know very well how difficult it is even in civilised nations with a well-organised police to obtain accurate information on such points, and how frequently we hear of 100,000 men being assembled on a public occasion when subsequent enquiry showed that the number was not more than 10,000. I was not justified for a moment to adopt that coffee-house babble brought by an anonymous Bulgarian to a Consul as at all furnishing a basis of belief that the accounts subsequently received had any justification.[1]

Disraeli was right; it *was* 'coffee-house babble'; and while it furnished ground for investigation, it afforded no proof of the detailed charges. Indeed, the suggested

[1] House of Commons, July 31.

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numbers of 25,000 to 26,000 were more than double those which investigation ultimately showed to have perished. But it was an indiscreet phrase, and was used by his political opponents to deepen the impression created by the previous incident.

Though Disraeli was sceptical, he was anxious to discover the truth; Elliot's activities were repeatedly stimulated from home; and a special envoy, Walter Baring, was sent to investigate the facts. Public feeling, however, shocked by the steadily recurrent, unrepudiated tales of atrocity, began to take fire; and there was a debate in the House of Commons which damaged the Government. Even the phlegmatic Hartington said at its close that, unless some complete defence of these horrors could be put forward, the Porte would lose all trace of the sympathy of England, and that it was the duty of the Government to make the Turks understand this.

To Lord Derby.

Confidential. H. OF C., *Aug.* 7, '76.—We have had a very damaging debate on Bulgarian atrocities, and it is lucky for us, in this respect, that the session is dying.

Had it not been for an adroit and ingenious speech by Bourke, who much distinguished himself, the consequences might have been rather serious.

But two grave results are now evident:

1st. That Elliot has shown a lamentable want of energy and deficiency of information throughout; and

2nd. That our own F. O. is liable to the same imputations. The F. O. misled me in the first replies wh. I gave on their voucher, and had I seen that despatch of Consul Reade, which never reached me, I wd. never have made those answers, and, what is more, shd. have pressed it on you to follow up Reade's revelations.

I write this now, because Hartington wants more papers, and wants them before Prorogation, that he may have more damaging debates.

It is a very awkward business, and, I fear, a great exposure of our diplomatic system abroad and at home.

Finally, on August 11, just before the close of the Session, there was for the first time a real attack on the

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Government, led by Evelyn Ashley, Shaftesbury's son, and supported, from the front bench, by Forster in a moderate and weighty speech, and by Harcourt in a reckless and slashing one. Gladstone made no sign. Harcourt 'hoped to God they had at last done with the Turk.' European opinion, he affirmed, would support any Power that 'would emancipate Europe from the curse which afflicted her, and redeem Christendom from the shame by which she had been too long dishonoured.' By this time Baring's preliminary report had been received, fixing the number of Bulgarian victims at 12,000; and Disraeli was able, with considerable reason, to maintain that his scepticism had been justified. The slaughter of 12,000 individuals was certainly, he said, 'a horrible event which no one can think of without emotion.' But was it sufficient reason to make the British Empire, as Harcourt demanded, denounce its treaties and change its traditional policy?

We are always treated as if we had some peculiar alliance with the Turkish Government, as if we were their peculiar friends, and even as if we were expected to uphold them in any enormity they might commit. I want to know what evidence there is of that, what interest we have in such a thing. We are, it is true, the allies of the Sultan of Turkey; so is Russia, so is Austria, so is France, and so are others. We are also their partners in a tripartite treaty, in which we, not only generally, but singly, guarantee with France and Austria the territorial integrity of Turkey. These are our engagements, and they are the engagements that we endeavour to fulfil. And if these engagements, renovated and repeated only four years ago by the wisdom of Europe, are to be treated by the honourable and learned gentleman as idle wind and chaff, and if we are to be told that our political duty is by force to expel the Turks to the other side of the Bosphorus, then politics cease to be an art, statesmanship becomes a mere mockery, and instead of being a House of Commons faithful to its traditions, and which is always influenced, I have ever thought, by sound principles of policy, whoever may be its leaders, we had better at once resolve ourselves into one of those revolutionary clubs which settle all political and social questions with the same ease as the honourable and learned member.

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In the peroration of this, his last speech in the House of Commons, Disraeli sounded once again the imperial note.

What may be the fate of the eastern part of Europe it would be arrogant for me to speculate upon, and if I had any thoughts on the subject I trust I should not be so imprudent or so indiscreet as to take this opportunity to express them. But I am sure that as long as England is ruled by English parties who understand the principles on which our Empire is founded, and who are resolved to maintain that Empire, our influence in that part of the world can never be looked upon with indifference. If it should happen that the Government which controls the greater portion of those fair lands is found to be incompetent for its purpose, neither England nor any of the Great Powers will shrink from fulfilling the high political and moral duty which will then devolve upon them.

But, Sir, we must not jump at conclusions so quickly as is now the fashion. There is nothing to justify us in talking in such a vein of Turkey as has been, and is being at this moment, entertained. The present is a state of affairs which requires the most vigilant examination and the most careful management. But those who suppose that England ever would uphold, or at this moment particularly is upholding, Turkey from blind superstition, and from a want of sympathy with the highest aspirations of humanity, are deceived. What our duty is at this critical moment is to maintain the Empire of England. Nor will we agree to any step, though it may obtain for a moment comparative quiet and a false prosperity, that hazards the existence of that Empire.

In this speech, as in all his other statements in the House on the question, Disraeli chivalrously defended Elliot from the attacks very generally made on his negligence and inefficiency. But he was only too well aware of how seriously the Government at home had been damaged by the conduct of their representative at Constantinople.

To Lord Derby.

Confidential. 10, DOWNING STREET, *Aug.* 15, '76.—I am off, but I send a line, which I would rather have said than written. I had the pleasure, however, of seeing our dearest friend yesterday afternoon, and tried to say it to her.

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We are on the eve, probably, of difficult negotiations, which require men who combine both tact and energy. The two principal places in these coming transactions will be Constantinople and Vienna—and in both posts we are singularly weak.

Elliot has many excellent qualities, both moral and intellectual, but he has no energy. This is probably the consequence of his wretched health; but, what[eve]r the cause, the result is the same. His conduct has seriously compromised, and damaged, the Government, and the more that is done now by him to redeem the situation, the more evident he makes it, that all this shd. have been done months ago.

Exertions, wh. are made in August, to counteract the mistakes of May, can achieve no reputation; as a public servant, the nation has utterly condemned him.

His hopeless health might, however, be a plea for a course on our part, wh., otherwise, might be painful. He might yet remain at his post, and assist an Extraordinary Envoy adapted to the present position of affairs. I think, myself, that Layard is the man for such a mission.

As for Buchanan, that is a hopeless case. He has been a public servant for ½ a century, and I knew him almost at the commencement of that time—at Constan[tinopl]e in 1830; I, therefore, can testify, that it is not age, which has enfeebled his intelligence or dimmed his powers. He was, and ever has been, a hopeless mediocrity.

Andrassy wants a guide—a man of quick perceptions and iron will—about him. I think Vienna more important than Constantinople. You ought to have no false delicacy in the business. Buchanan should be confidentially communicated with, and told that he should resign. . . .

Adieu! cher camarade! I wish you success and fame—and believe you will obtain both; but, in great affairs, to succeed you must not spare the feelings of mediocrities.

After his farewell to the Commons the new peer went for a short visit to the Queen at Osborne, and then spent a 'happy week' with the Bradfords at Castle Bromwich. 'The weather,' he wrote to Corry, 'was worthy of the "Castle of Indolence"; we sate under bowery trees surrounded by cooing doves, and, as mankind is mimetic, we cooed ourselves. At six o'clock, we went for some amusing drive, and Miladi generally drove me alone. I visited Drayton—a very fine place,

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full of art and all on a great scale.' His host and hostess, when he left, took him to the station at Birmingham, where he had 'what is called "an ovation" . . . I was cheered through the streets, and at the station the demonstration was "intense."' To Lady Bradford he wrote from Hughenden that evening, August 22: 'They were very tumultuous at Brummagem after we separated; perhaps you heard them. And there was a party collected at every station till we got to Banbury with vociferous ejaculations and congratulations to "the noble Hurl of Beaconsfield."' Two days later he added, 'I continue to receive innumerable letters of congratulation, occasionally mixed with 1 or 2 of menace.'

It is strange that Beaconsfield had not a larger proportion of menacing letters. For that enthusiasm of the English people, which he had often signalised and admired, was keenly stirred in reprobation of the Bulgarian atrocities; and throughout the early autumn months a furious agitation raged, following the lines of Harcourt's call to a crusade. It was assumed, in spite of obvious evidence of exaggeration, that the worst stories of horrors were true; and it was demanded that the Government guilty of permitting, if not decreeing, such atrocities should be forced to evacuate, certainly the provinces in which they had occurred, if not European territory altogether. Public meetings were held all over the country, of which the keynote was that grave wrong had been done, and that the wrongdoers must be punished and the wrong righted, regardless of British interests or even of British treaty obligations. It was further claimed that the issue of true religion was at stake, that the followers of Christ must be rescued from the domination of the followers of Mahomet; and accordingly Nonconformist ministers on the one hand, and on the other High Church clergy, suspicious of Beaconsfield ever since the Public Worship Regulation Act, took a prominent part in agitation. In the background, despite the fact that Granville and Hartington were known to view the movement coldly,

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and that Gladstone had as yet made no sign, the strings were pulled by Liberal and Radical wirepullers, and there was an increasing tendency to throw the blame, for the horrors which were so hotly denounced, on the British as much as on the Turkish Government. The refusal to accept the Berlin memorandum and the despatch of the fleet to Besika Bay were shamelessly perverted into direct encouragements to the Porte to oppress and massacre its Christian subjects.

Beaconsfield, carrying on the business of government from his quiet Buckinghamshire home, was fertile in ideas for turning to account an agitation which he deprecated.

To Sir Stafford Northcote.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 2, 1876.—We must be careful about 'demonstrations.' Nothing of that kind will do, which is not very effective. Unless it hits the nail on the head, it will be looked on as weak and hysterical. Elliot's stupidity has nearly brought us to a great peril. If he had acted with promptitude, or even kept himself, and us, informed, these 'atrocities' might have been checked. As it is, he has brought us into the position, most unjustly, of being thought to connive at them.

But when we have committed a mistake, or find ourselves in difficulties, the best thing is to turn them into 'commodities,' as Falstaff says, or something like it.[1] The 'atrocities' will permit us to dictate to the Porte. That was the meaning of the telegram respecting which you wrote to me. It is to be hoped, that the leading part, which England may take, in obtaining an armistice, and afterwards in the preliminaries, will make the excited 'Public' forget, or condone, the Elliotiana.

I hope this may be effected long before your meeting. .

To Lord Salisbury.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 3.—. . . I am here, tied to my post. Indeed I ought to be at Whitehall, but that really, in August and Septr., would be too dreary. Even Derby gets back every night to his 'placens uxor.' But still even here, with endless telegrams and ceaseless messengers, I find myself, every now and then, behindhand.

[1] 'A good wit will make use of anything; I will turn diseases to commodity.' 2 *King Henry IV.*, Act I., Sc. 2.

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Affairs are most critical. Had it not been for those unhappy 'atrocities,' we should have settled a peace very honorable to England, and satisfactory to Europe.

Now, we are obliged to work from a new point of departure, and dictate to Turkey, who has forfeited all sympathy. . . . Derby is behaving with energy, and I hope will be up to the mark—it will not be from want of bottle-holding. It is the most difficult business I have ever had to touch.

To Lord Derby.

Confidential. HUGHENDEN, *Sept.* 4.—I have been thinking much about the present state of affairs and our new point of departure—wise and inevitable, and wise because inevitable. But it is difficult to conceal from ourselves that it is a course which will probably bring about a result very different from that originally contemplated.

I cannot help doubting whether any arrangement, though I have confidence in your skill and your fortune, a quality as important as skill, is now practicable. I fear affairs will linger on till the spring, when Russia and Austria will march their armies into the Balkans, either simultaneously and with a certain understanding, or one following the other's example from jealousy and fear.

As Count Andrassy observed to Sir Andrew Buchanan, 'there is no alternative between the notes of this year and the "solution" of the Eastern Question.'

I think the probability is that it will be 'the solution of the Eastern Question,' and, if so, it is wise that we should take the lead in it. Our chance of success will be greater because from us it will be unexpected.

If old Brunnow were here, the work, so far as Russia is concerned, might be shorter than with others. Perhaps Schouvaloff may be equally handy, but certainly Palmerston with Brunnow managed in 1840 the solution of the Eastern Question in the other direction most admirably.

Whatever the jealousies of Austria and Russia, they would prefer a division of the Balkan spoil under the friendly offices of England to war between themselves certainly, and perhaps with others. Constantinople with an adequate district should be neutralised and made a free port, in the custody and under the guardianship of England, as the Ionian Isles were.

I fancy there would be no difficulty in the enlargement of Greece. Nature indicates, and policy would not oppose it.

And now about Germany? When I am told its Prime Minister is in solitude and cannot be disturbed, and that the

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Queen's Ambassador is here because it is of no use being at his post, I listen to eccentricities, which must not be permitted to regulate events affecting the destiny of generations and Empires. If Prince Bismarck won't see the Queen's Ambassador, he must see you, but I cannot doubt for a moment, if he hears from you that there is real business afloat, he will be seen as much as we desire.

But what does he want? Does he want 'compensation'? Is it to be in Austrian or even Russian Germany? Or would he feel, without now demanding it, that such compensation would naturally accrue to Germany in the course of events from the Slavist development of Austria and perhaps Russia?

Or would he desire, as a remote and maritime Power, to place himself on the level of England, and share with us the guardianship of the Hellespont and the Symplegades, like the *garnison confédératif* of Mainz and other places after the peace of 1815?

I write this on the assumption that the present attempt at peace will fail. God grant it may not! But, if it do, I humbly think we cannot act too powerfully and too promptly.

Decision and energy will render the work practicable; hesitation and timidity will involve us in infinite difficulty and peril, in the whirlpool of which we should disappear.

Sept. 6.—. . . I sent you Northcote's letter, because he has an ingenious mind, with popular sympathies, but timid, unwisely timid—which timidity always is, tho' caution has many charms.

What I wish to impress upon you, at this moment, as regards home, is not to act, as if you were under the control of popular opinion. If so, you may do what they like, but they won't respect you for doing it.

After all, all this tumult is on a false assumption, that we have been, or are, upholding Turkey. All the Turks may be in the Propontis, so far as I am concerned, and the first thing, after we had declined the Berlin mem., that you did, was to tell Musurus so.

If the thing goes well and we get what we want, all this row will subside, and be forgotten before our first Cab. Council, and we shall get the credit of the arrangement; but if an arrangement takes place, and it is supposed that we have acted under the pressure of this Hudibrastic crew of High Ritualists, Dissenting ministers, and 'the great Liberal party,' we shall be contemptible.

Now—what is going on? You talk of 'if we get the armistice.' Well, you cd. hardly expect that the Turks wd. assent to such a naked proposition, tho' it was a very wise thing for you to make it. But if you had a man at

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Constantinople, by this time he wd. have fashioned 3 or 4 prelims. of peace, got them sanctioned by the Powers, and the Porte wd. have accepted the armistice. They wd. of course be vague—but definite eno'.

1. *Status quo*, etc.

2. Govt. of the Provinces (Bulgaria included?) to be settled hereafter.

3. Indemnity from Servia, to be settled hereafter.

I fear there must be a Congress, tho' I hate it, and I am quite confident we cd. have managed without it, had it not been for this Bulgarian bogey. . . .

At this juncture, the atrocity agitation being in full swing, but comparatively ineffective because leaderless, Disraeli's great rival returned in good earnest 'from Elba' to put himself at its head. Gladstone had taken no part in the Parliamentary debates on the subject, and had only made a cursory allusion to it when attacking in the House the general Eastern policy of the Government. But now, finding, to use his own words, 'that the question was alive,' he realised that his opportunity had come, and he took it without hesitation or scruple.

To Lady Bradford.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 5.—. . . Ld. Russell, having his brother-in-law Ambassador at Constantinople, halts and hesitates in his dotage. All his latter years he has been swearing by Ld. Derby and Elliot: and now he is going to call Parlt. together in Novr. to denounce them both. Gladstone, 'who had retired from public life,' can't resist the first opportunity, and is going to declaim at Blackheath, having preliminarily given the cue to public opinion in a pamphlet. I wonder what Hartington thinks of all this activity. He is quietly killing grouse at Bolton Abbey, and, this very morning, sent me four brace—good fellow![1] The state of affairs is not one very favorable to the nervous system; but mine is not yet shaken.

[1] Writing on Sept. 6 to Hartington to thank him for the grouse, Beaconsfield said: 'It is very kind of you to remember me, one likes to be remembered. I am sorry I shall not meet you so often in future, but we may meet perhaps more frequently in those secret societies where we sometimes encounter each other, when we ought to be, as Madame de Staël said, "conspiring on the public place."' See Holland's *Devonshire*, Vol. I., p. 174.

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Lord Morley, in his great *Life of Gladstone*, treats his hero's retirement after the reverse of 1874 as not merely whole-hearted and sincere in its conception, in the resolve to find fitter occupation than politics for the interval between the age of sixty-five and the grave—this may be conceded; but also as, for two years and a half, practically effective in execution. He mentions, indeed, in an inadequate and perfunctory manner that at the close of the session of 1874 Gladstone engaged—unwillingly, it is strangely suggested—in ecclesiastical debates over the Public Worship Regulation Bill, the Scotch Patronage Bill, and the Endowed Schools Bill. But, with that exception, the whole of his Parliamentary activity of nearly three sessions, till the summer of 1876, is dismissed in four words as 'occasional visits to Westminster,' the inference being that the occasions were of such slight importance as not to be worth chronicling. Immersed in pamphleteering controversies about Ritualism and Vaticanism, in theological and classical studies, in the simple delights of the Hawarden park and library, it was, we are given to understand, only with the utmost reluctance, and on the imperative call of duty and of humanity, that the statesman, who had put Parliament behind his back, emerged to lead an impassioned crusade against the Government and particularly against the Prime Minister.

The facts do not bear this picture out. It was thus, perhaps, that they presented themselves to Gladstone himself; W. E. Forster once said of him in the House of Commons, 'He can persuade most people of most things, and, above all, he can persuade himself of almost anything.' But those who have read the frequent references to Gladstone's Parliamentary appearances in Chapters 9, 10, and 12 of Volume V., will be disposed to think that all from which he retired, after the first few months, was the daily drudgery of leadership. Not merely when he was lured by the ecclesiastical bait, but whenever any question of moment was raised, whenever,

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especially, there was an opportunity for a vehement party attack upon the Government, he appeared on the Opposition front bench, and almost always, when he appeared, he spoke. Listen to the friendly testimony of Sir Henry Lucy's diary in the middle of the session of 1875 and early in that of 1876.

May 7, 1875.—Gladstone's retirement from the leadership of the Liberal party is much such another withdrawal from the conduct of affairs as the captain of a ship effects when he turns in for the night. The first mate is left in charge of the ship, but on the slightest emergency the captain is to be called.

Feb. 14, 1876.—For a man who, as he wrote to 'My dear Granville' more than a year ago, 'at the age of sixty-five and after forty-two years of a laborious public life,' thought himself 'entitled to retire,' Gladstone is uncommonly regular in his attendance at the House, and is singularly ready to fling himself into debate.

It might have been expected that, on these reappearances, the retired veteran of more than forty years' service would have played the part of a Nestor; would have moderated by his mature experience the rash counsels and reckless daring of younger men. On the contrary, on all the most conspicuous occasions, he returned, not to moderate but to aggravate, not to still the spirit of faction but to evoke it; to spur the constituted leaders of the Liberal party into attacks on the Government which they deprecated, or, failing success in this, to launch out himself into vehement denunciation —'like the Dragon of Wantley breathing fire and fury,' as Disraeli wrote in one of his letters. Take, for example, in 1874, Gladstone's attack on the Scotch Patronage Bill, and his threat of resulting disestablishment if a measure was passed which his Presbyterian friend Argyll warmly commended; in 1875, his violent assault on Northcote's Sinking Fund proposals—a scheme entirely in harmony with his own financial doctrine; and more particularly, in the early months of 1876, his association with Lowe in denouncing the Suez Canal Purchase, and

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the leading part he took in forcing the Opposition, against Hartington's better judgment, into a prolonged and factious fight over the Imperial Titles Bill. These spasmodic and unbalanced irruptions into politics are, with the trifling exception noted above, not merely slurred over, but absolutely ignored, in Lord Morley's *Life*; yet they surely must profoundly affect the final opinion to be passed on the singleness of heart and soundness of judgment with which Gladstone plunged into his furious 'Atrocity' crusade.

The available evidence certainly suggests that by 1876 Gladstone, like Cowper's retired statesman, had grown weary of his self-imposed exile, was feeling 'a secret thirst for his renounced employs,' and was, it may be only half consciously, on the lookout for a fitting occasion on which to burst from his retreat in order to save 'a sinking State.'[1] His Parliamentary activities in that spring were noticeably greater than in the previous two years; they consisted of strenuous attacks on Government about matters of foreign and imperial politics, in regard to which a patriotic Opposition is loth to take the offensive. This restlessness was as observable at Hawarden as at Westminster. Early in the year Sir Louis Mallet told Lord George Hamilton: 'A great friend of mine and a first-rate judge of men and affairs has just come back from Hawarden. He says Gladstone is in a most restless frame of mind—so much so, that if he gets his opportunity he will become the great demagogue of the century.'[2]

And there was little doubt as to the quarry whom the old hunter, once more sniffing the scent, was preparing to stalk. His mind was full of his successful rival, and of deep suspicions of that rival's character and policy. He wrote at this time to Hartington: 'Dizzy has never wanted courage, but his daring is elastic, and capable of any amount of extension with the servility

[1] See Cowper's *Retirement*, lines 473-480.
[2] Lord G. Hamilton's *Parliamentary Reminiscences*, p. 131.

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of the times. He has fallen upon a period singularly favourable to its exercise.'[1] That 'malignity'[2] which Disraeli noted in Gladstone's attitude towards himself during a quarter of a century, and which is suffered occasionally to peep out in Lord Morley's *Life*, was now to be given a free course. Lady Beaconsfield, with her pacificatory and mollifying influence on the relations between the two men, was gone. Gladstone, in his private letters during this period, indulged in the wildest and most absurd charges against the rival who was, in his opinion, pursuing 'the most selfish and least worthy' policy he had ever known. 'What [Dizzy] hates,' he wrote to the Duke of Argyll, 'is Christian liberty and reconstruction. He supports old Turkey, thinking that if vital improvements be averted, it must break down; and his fleet is at Besika Bay, I feel pretty sure, to be ready to lay hold of Egypt as his share.' It is difficult to discuss with patience such extraordinary nonsense. Besika Bay, a convenient anchorage enough for a fleet destined to protect Christians in Constantinople against Mohammedan fanaticism, or to save Constantinople from Russian attack, would of course be ridiculously out of the way for operations against Egypt, if any were contemplated. But, as a matter of fact, Beaconsfield, far from contemplating separate action in Egypt, was during this autumn promoting, by a benevolent attitude towards the Goschen-Joubert mission, that joint French and English action in Egyptian affairs, which was the consistent policy of his Government, and which was only departed from—under pressure of events, no doubt—by the Gladstone Ministry which succeeded him. Again, Gladstone told the Duke of Argyll, 'I have a strong suspicion that Dizzy's crypto-Judaism has had to do with his policy. The Jews of the East *bitterly* hate the Christians; who have not always used them well.' There is no trace of Beaconsfield's specially Judaic feeling in his Eastern policy. The race

[1] Holland's *Devonshire*, Vol. I., p. 167.
[2] See Vol. V., p. 361.

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which that feeling would have led him to support would have been, as was shown in *Tancred*, the Arab, and not the Turk. What Beaconsfield was endeavouring to carry through, amid enormous difficulties, was the traditional policy of England, to which she was bound by treaty, of supporting the independence and integrity of the Turkish Empire.

In fact, Gladstone's attitude towards Beaconsfield, during the last three years and a half of the Beaconsfield Government, amounted very nearly to a personal vendetta. He avowed that his energies were entirely applied to counterworking the Prime Minister over the whole field of politics. So notorious was his feeling among his intimates that Lord Acton, by the indirect method of a letter to Mrs. Drew, Gladstone's daughter, vehemently remonstrated with him, at the time of Beaconsfield's death, for proposing a public monument to a man of whose policy and character he thought so ill. Gladstone, it was confidently asserted by Acton, considered Beaconsfield's 'doctrines false, but the man more false than his doctrine'; believed 'that he demoralised public opinion, bargained with diseased appetites, stimulated passions, prejudices, and selfish desires, that they might maintain his influence'; and deemed him, in short, 'the worst and most immoral Minister since Castlereagh.'[1] To the four elements, which Lord Morley enumerates, 'in the mighty storm that now [August, 1876] agitated Mr. Gladstone's breast'—the rejection of the Berlin memorandum, the Bulgarian atrocities, the responsibilities incurred by the Crimean War, and sympathy with the Eastern Church[2]—there must be added two more; impatience of longer retirement from the forefront of politics, and a burning determination to pull down a too successful rival.

Gladstone's pamphlet on *The Bulgarian Horrors*, which appeared on September 6, was couched in superlatives. He would not wait for Baring's detailed report which

[1] *Letters of Lord Acton to Mary Drew*, p. 78. [2] *Gladstone*, Bk. VII., ch. 4.

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appeared a fortnight later; but based his invective on the most horrifying stories of the unverified newspaper reports. He denounced the Turkish race as 'the one great anti-human specimen of humanity'; he wrote of 'fell satanic orgies'; he averred that the crimes which had been committed would move the indignation of European gaol-birds and South Sea cannibals. These were wild and whirling words, indeed; the present generation, who have supped full of greater horrors, can realise better than his contemporaries how false was the perspective. He abused the Government for what he assumed to be their sole policy, the *status quo*. He invited his countrymen to insist on a change which, in concurrence with other States, should bring about 'the extinction of the Turkish executive power in Bulgaria. Let the Turks now carry away their abuses in the only possible manner—namely, by carrying off themselves. Their Zaptiehs and their Mudirs, their Bimbashis and their Yuzbashis, their Kaimakams and their Pashas, one and all, bag and baggage, shall, I hope, clear out from the province they have desolated and profaned.'

Let us see how this outburst was regarded by Beaconsfield.

To Lord Derby.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 8, '76.—. . . Gladstone has had the impudence to send me his pamphlet, tho' he accuses me of several crimes. The document is passionate and not strong; vindictive and ill-written[1]—that of course. Indeed, in that respect, of all the Bulgarian horrors, perhaps the greatest.

Dss. of Manchester said to me, just before we broke up, 'That gentleman is only waiting to come to the fore with all his hypocritical retirement.' She hates him, for good reason. She showed her discrimination; however, I think he will have to go back, if we are firm and prudent, and Hartington may remain at Doncaster.

[1] On second thoughts Beaconsfield modified this opinion. Writing next day to Lady Bradford he describes the pamphlet as 'quite as unprincipled as usual, tho' on the surface apparently not so ill-written as is his custom. The reason why, because it is evidently dictated; so it is not so involved and obscure, but more wordy and more careless and imprudent.'

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To Lady Bradford.

HUGHENDEN MANOR [? *Sept.* 8].—. . . A friend of mine writes he went the other night to Haymarket Theatre. There were three empty stalls before him. The play *Heir-at-Law*, and the actor, to see a Mr. Clarke. Probably you know all about him. Into one of the stalls came Ld. Granville; then in a little time, Gladstone; then, at last, Harty-Tarty! Gladstone laughed very much at the performance; H.-T. never even smiled. 3 conspirators. . . .

10, DOWNING ST., *Sept.* 9.—I write you a line from D. S., where I unexpectedly find myself. . . . I have had a satisfactory morning with the great Secy.,[1] and as we are agreed I think we shall conquer. Tho' when all the world is mad, and there are only two keepers, the latter shd. be in danger. . . .

The Fairy is very nervous about the Bucks election, wh. won't come off for a fortnight. All that I can tell her is that every gentleman, and every leading farmer, is on Fremantle's Committee, and only two landlords of any mark, Ld. Chesham and Sir H. Verney, support Rupert [Carrington]. I hope the general insanity may have subsided in a fortnight; if not, I really can't answer what may be the result of popular passion and the ballot. . . .

To Sir Stafford Northcote.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 11, 1876.—I am sorry to hear you have to attend a public meeting.

The first and cardinal point, at the present moment, is, that no member of the Government should countenance the idea that we are hysterically 'modifying' our policy, in consequence of the excited state of the public mind. If such an idea gets about, we shall become contemptible.

Derby, whom I saw on Saturday, is deeply impressed with this principle, and it will entirely guide him in his reply to a deputation, which he receives this morning.

When I was in town on Saturday, Baring's Report had not yet arrived!

None of these brawlers propose anything practical or precise. Even Gladstone has greatly exposed himself. He writes a pamphlet, in which, for ethnological reasons, he counsels the expulsion of the Turkish race from Europe, and England rapturously assembled at Greenwich to hear the statesmanlike development of this wise proposition. But,

[1] Derby.

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the day before, having become alive to his folly, he writes a letter to *The Times*, saying he did not mean the expulsion of the Turkish nation—only of the Turkish Ministers. That he meant the expulsion of some Ministers, I have little doubt, only I think they were not Turks.

I am told his speech was a blank disappointment to the infuriate and merciless humanitarians, who looked upon it as a sort of revival of the Andrassy note.

Generally speaking, when the country goes mad, which it does every now and then—*e.g.*, Cardinal Wiseman and Queen Caroline—I think it best, that one should wait till everything has been said and frequently in one direction, and then the country, tired of hearing the same thing over and over again, begins to reflect, and opinion changes as quickly as it was formed. Fortunately for England, it is only the beginning of Septr.; so there is time.

Our case is a complete case, if people would only listen to argument, but I doubt whether they will—except perhaps from a Cabinet Minister.

Our policy, supported by the country, was non-interference. We objected to the Berlin note because it insured interference. All the Powers then adopted our view, which showed it was the sensible one.

We sent our fleet to B[esika] B[ay] to defend H.M. subjects and their property, and to prevent Xtian' massacres, and to guard over British interests; and the consequence has been that there has been tranquillity instead of anxiety, and that too in the midst of revolutions, and our Ambassador has received the thanks of all the Xtian communities for our having saved them. Nothing can describe the alarm of the Xtian population of Constantinople, and its contiguous territories, at the rumor of our fleet being withdrawn.

But then, the 'moral and material aid given to the Turks,' by the refusal of the Berl. note, and the sending of the fleet, has so emboldened the Porte, that these 'atrocities' have taken place!

The 'atrocities' occurred before either of these great events.

Don't mix yourself up with punishing Agas and compensation. What ought to be done, will be done.

Derby, who was in hearty agreement with his chief, showed, as Beaconsfield wrote again and again, unusual vigour and decision, both in speech and in diplomacy, this autumn. He told the deputation of working-men who waited on him on September 11 at the Foreign

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Office that, to judge by the abuse showered on the Government, it would appear 'that there are a great many people in England who fancy that Lord Beaconsfield is the Sultan and that I am the Grand Vizier.' Whereas, in fact, 'with regard to acts connected with the internal administration of Turkey, we have exactly the same rights that are possessed by every other Great Power, neither more nor less; and I do not learn that in France, or Austria, or Italy, or Germany people are crying out as they do here, and denouncing their Government as being in complicity with those answerable for these atrocities.' There were two questions, he pointed out, essentially distinct. One was the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire, and the other the relationship between the Turkish Government and the subject races. The territorial integrity meant, at bottom, the possession of Constantinople. 'No Great Power would be willing to see it in the hands of any other Great Power. No small Power could hold it at all. And as for joint occupation, and other ingenious schemes of that kind, they are, at best, dangerous and doubtful expedients. . . . Any attempt at partition would, in all probability, be the signal for a European war.' So the territorial *status quo*, which had been the policy of Gladstone's Government as well as of Beaconsfield's, and was guaranteed by treaty, should be preserved. But the relations between the Turkish Government and the subject races had often been modified and might be modified again. The Beaconsfield Government had no objection in principle to any further extension of constitutional changes which the guaranteeing Powers might think necessary. They were doing all they could, in conjunction with these Powers, to bring about first an armistice and then peace. The Bulgarians had a right to expect reparation, exemplary punishment of the offenders, and security against the recurrence of outrage. If humanity was a virtue, so was justice—justice to Turks and Mohammedans, as well as to Bulgarians and Christians. Other Powers were

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not looking at the question solely from the humanitarian point of view, however that standpoint might predominate in England.

This presentment of the case showed admirable common sense; and there were members of the Opposition who recognised the fact, as appeared from a conversation which took place between Goschen and the Queen.

From Queen Victoria.

BALMORAL, *Sept.* 13, '76.—. . . Lord Derby seems to have spoken remarkably well, and no doubt his speeches will do good, but whether they will stop the agitation she does not feel sure. Mr. Goschen, who is staying at Braemar, and who dined here yesterday, spoke with great good sense and moderation, greatly deprecating the wild, senseless agitation of the country, and the dangerous and absurd extent to which the philanthropy is carried. . . . He said that he thought it most unnecessary and ill-judged that 'we should perform the part of sister of charity to the rest of Europe,' which is an excellent mode of putting it. The Queen told him that, without wishing to injure a person, it was Sir H. Elliot who had been the cause of this trouble and that he had never ascertained the truth till long after he should have known it. He regretted this, as if Parliament had been sitting it would have been easy to put a stop to these misrepresentations. He said he felt how very difficult the task of the Government was, but he hoped that events might remove this. But how are we ever to reconcile the obstinacy of the Turks and Servians ? . . .

The Queen, who had been horrified at the Bulgarian reports, more than once pressed upon Beaconsfield the advisability of speaking out more strongly in denunciation of the crimes and their perpetrators. Some of his colleagues also urged that the public would not be satisfied without some such utterance. But Beaconsfield would not be persuaded. He had shown, he thought, his horror at atrocities sufficiently in Parliament; he would forfeit his self-respect if, in deference to outside clamour, he said more now. He had to attend an agricultural dinner at Aylesbury on September 20, the eve of the poll for the vacancy in the representation of Bucks

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created by his acceptance of a peerage. He had just had rather a sharp attack of gout, and wrote on the previous day to Lady Bradford: 'I got downstairs to-day, free from all pain, but a little weak, as one must always become from an imprisonment of four or five days or more. I shall go to the dinner to-morrow, and make a remark or two, if I have a good opportunity.' In the speech which he delivered there was nothing of the sentimental kind at all, but strong condemnation of the unpatriotic character of the agitation. The Foreign Secretary was in the midst, he said, of most difficult negotiations, with the object of securing British interests of the highest importance and also the peace of Europe.

Under ordinary circumstances a British Minister so placed, whatever might be his difficulties, would have the consolation of knowing that he was backed by the country. It would be affectation for me to pretend that this is the position of Her Majesty's Government at this moment. . . . Unhappily a great portion of the people of this country, prompted by feelings which have drawn their attention to extraneous matters, have arrived at a conclusion which, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, if carried into effect, would alike be injurious to the permanent and important interests of England, and fatal to any chance of preserving the peace of Europe.

Beaconsfield expressed his admiration for the enthusiasm and the noble sympathy shown by the English people; but he feared that 'designing politicians might take advantage of such sublime sentiments, and apply them for the furtherance of their sinister ends.' He continued:

I do not think that there is any language which can denounce too strongly conduct of this description. He who at such a moment would avail himself of such a commanding sentiment in order to obtain his own individual ends, suggesting a course which he must know to be injurious to the interests of the country, and not favourable to the welfare of mankind, is a man whose conduct no language can too strongly condemn. He outrages the principle of patriotism, which is the

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soul of free communities. He does more—he influences in the most injurious manner the common welfare of humanity. Such conduct, if pursued by any man at this moment, ought to be indignantly reprobated by the people of England, for in the general havoc and ruin which it may bring about it may, I think, be fairly described as worse than any of those Bulgarian atrocities which now occupy attention.

This attack on Gladstone's agitation as worse than the Bulgarian atrocities infuriated his partisans and has been condemned by more dispassionate critics. But a policy which gratuitously provoked the 'havoc and ruin' of a general European war might surely be not unfairly spoken of in these terms; and such a war, in Beaconsfield's opinion, was inevitable if Gladstone's policy was carried through. Gladstone, he wrote to Lady Bradford a few days later, would 'avenge Bulgarian atrocities by the butchery of the world.' The speech proceeded:

> The country in some of its exhibitions has completely out-Heroded the most extravagant conceptions. They tell us that nothing will satisfy them but the expulsion of the Turks from Europe, and the institution of Slavonic governments—whether imperial, royal, or republican, I am at a loss to know. Now Her Majesty's Government, and as I believe the Government of every country, are perfectly aware that, if such plans are attempted to be carried into effect, we shall be landed in a European war of no slight duration. . . . Let us remember that the sending a million Moors and Jews out of Spain a good many years ago so convulsed that nation that it has never recovered itself, and Europe suffers even at this moment from that act. I am quite convinced that Mr. Gladstone on reflection never intended anything of the kind. If he had gone to the House of Commons and had proposed to the House of Commons and the Speaker to attend Greenwich Fair, and go to the top of Greenwich Hill and all roll down to the bottom, I declare he could not have proposed anything more absurdly incongruous.

In Beaconsfield's private letters the condemnation of Gladstone's conduct was still more severe. That he should emerge from retirement to lead this demagogic crusade against the foreign policy of the country—a policy in essentials identical with that which, when in office, he

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had pursued himself—appeared to Beaconsfield, and also to the Queen, to be outrageous. In the letters to Lady Bradford Gladstone is frequently called 'Tartuffe'; 'the willing victim of every delusion that may bring him power.' To Derby Beaconsfield wrote in October: 'Posterity will do justice to that unprincipled maniac Gladstone—extraordinary mixture of envy, vindictiveness, hypocrisy, and superstition; and with one commanding characteristic—whether Prime Minister, or Leader of Opposition, whether preaching, praying, speechifying, or scribbling—never a gentleman!'

The Queen congratulated Beaconsfield on his 'masterly speech'; and he himself was satisfied with the effect produced.

To Lady Bradford.

Hughenden Manor [*Sept.* 21, 1876].—. . . Physically, I got over yesterday fairly well: at least I am not worse to-day. It was rather a remarkable meeting: 500 persons—but all the notables of the county of both sides. That made it peculiar. And it was very difficult to make a speech, political but not party.

All I can say is, if I cd. judge from the enthusiasm, and take it as a fair index of county sentiment, we ought to be pretty sure of the struggle that is going on at this very hour. . . . Charley C[arrington] looked very white all the time I was speaking—just an hour. He felt, as it were, caught in a trap.

At any rate the speech was successful in keeping the Bucks seat for the Government. A member of the Carrington family endeavoured to win it for the Liberals; and Beaconsfield had written to Derby two or three days before: 'I believe they are all waiting for the Bucks election—to decide the fate of the Government and the policy of England. Gladstone has been down to Wycombe Abbey, and Granville took £200 to £1[00] from Ld. Alington that we shd. be beaten. Charley Carrington asked Granville to let him have half the bet, and said, "What I want is to get it in thousands!" They are cocksure. I retain my opinion that Mr. Fremantle will be returned by a

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good majority.' Fremantle's majority was under 200; but it was sufficient; and, in spite of the impetus given to agitation by Gladstone's emergence, the tide began to turn in favour of the Government. 'Let nothing shake you,' wrote Beaconsfield just before the poll to Derby. 'The more I think and see, the more sure is my conviction that this outcry is all froth, except where it is faction.'

To Lord Derby.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 23, '76.—. . . If it will give you the slightest satisfaction, that I shd. come up to town and 'assist' you in receiving the Russians,[1] I shd. be more than ready.

Only understand: I say this out of true *camaraderie*, and that you shd. not feel isolated, or deserted by your colleagues, at this trying moment.

I have no wish to take any lead, and I wd. leave everything to your consummate tact with complete confidence. Therefore, say just what you feel.

You can't be too firm. What the public meetings want is nonsense, not politics: something quite shadowy, speculative, and not practical. They must recur to common sense and the possible.

The result of an attempt to put their plans into operation wd. be war by England alone against Turkey, and then the Porte allying herself with Russia for protection.

There is nothing bet[wee]n our plan and partition.

To Lady Bradford.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 27.—. . . I think things look pretty well, but there will be many ups and downs before all is finished. This is a critical day. I think I told you why I did not go up to town to-day to receive the City Address. It wd. have made them of too much importance, but I have settled with D[erby] what to say, and, I doubt not, he will say it well. He has such a repugnance to enthusiasm, and his clear, callous, common sense is so shocked by the freaks of the foolish, and so contemptuous of the machinations of the factious, that he quite enjoys discharging a volume of cold water on their unprotected persons.

The Times, as you must have observed yesterday, is ratting

[1] Beaconsfield is referring to a City deputation in favour of Gladstone's policy.

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fast, like a thaw after a very great frost. As for myself, I delight in the whole *débâcle*, having never bated an inch, and being quite as 'cynical' and 'heartless,' and everything else, as I was at the beginning. As for Gladstone—as your sister always properly styles him, 'that rascal Gladstone'—he is nowhere. The 'favorite' has broken down. . . .

I forgot to tell you all this time, while I am receiving indignant resolutions about Bulg. atrocities, I am equally receiving emblazoned, and some very pretty, addresses of congratulation on what is called my 'elevation.' This morning came one from Chester (I wish I cd. send it to you), a beautiful work of art, in many colors, and resplendent with much gold. The initial letter is a very pretty Cupid, worthy of Albano, lifting up, with pride and delight, an earl's coronet! It is almost the only signal of my new order I possess. I was much amused with yr. acct. of the Wharncliffe achievements in this respect. I literally have done nothing in that way, and my plate and my linen are still plebeian. Had not a fairy dropped a paper-cutter from Mt. Olympus into my library, I shd. not know really how to sign my name I shd. still consider myself 'Christofero Sly.' . . .

Derby told the City deputation that, as soon as Baring's detailed report had been received and considered, the Government had sent a strong despatch to Elliot, directing him to obtain an audience of the Sultan, to lay all the proved facts before him, to denounce the chief authors of the atrocities by name and demand their punishment, and to represent the urgent necessity of immediate relief for the innocent sufferers. But he strongly deprecated a crusade to turn the Turk out of Europe, a crusade in which England would probably receive no support, and which would be resisted in arms by at least one Great Power, Austria. He pointed out that there was no homogeneity of religion or race in the Balkan peninsula, and he therefore rejected the idea of creating a fresh group of tributary States; but he was anxious to extend local government in that region. He added, 'I do not at all wish to disguise the fact that what has happened in Bulgaria has to a certain extent changed the position, not only of our own Government, but of every European Government.'

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Beaconsfield had, similarly, himself written to Derby of 'the new departure' of the Government; but he was always anxious to emphasise that it did not constitute a new 'policy.' The method might be different; the policy, that of maintaining the integrity and independence of Turkey, remained. In this sense he wrote to Salisbury, in answer to a letter in which the Indian Secretary showed himself particularly sensible of the necessity of change.

From Lord Salisbury.

Private. [DIEPPE], *Sept.* 23, '76.—The *Pall Mall* of yesterday says that a Cabinet was summoned for to-day. As I have received no summons, I presume your secretary thought I was out of reach. This is not so. Whenever you give 24 hours' notice to the India Office I can be present, and can come over at any time if wanted. . . .

The Bucks election shows that the agitation has not been without effect on our party. It is clear enough that the traditional Palmerstonian policy is at an end. We have not the power, even if we have the wish, to give back any of the revolted districts to the *discretionary* government of the Porte. The proposal in Derby's letter of the 21st, to send a Commissioner to Bulgaria known to be friendly to the Christians, is very good for the emergency: but as a permanent arrangement more will be required.

I should like to submit for your consideration whether the opportunity should not be taken to exact some security for the good government of the Christians generally throughout the Turkish Empire. The Govt. of 1856 was satisfied with promises: but they were promises extending to all the Christian subjects. We must have something more than promises: but it will not do for us to cover a less extensive area of relief than was covered by the Hatts referred to in the Treaty of 1856. Would some such arrangement as this be possible? Let there be an Officer of State established at Constantinople who shall be in fact, if not in name, Protector of Christians. He should be nominated in concert with the Powers: and for a term of years. He should always have access to the Sultan: and it should be his duty to call the attention of the Turkish Government to any breach of the decrees which have been issued in protection of the Christians. He should not be removable except with the consent of the Powers; and he should be freely in communication with the Ambassadors.

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It should further be his duty to submit to the Turkish Government a list of persons fit to hold office as Governors of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria; and the Porte should be bound to choose the Governors from that list. These Governors should not be removable except with the Protector's assent; and should hold office for a term of years. Subsidiary arrangements for councils might be necessary: but they would be of less importance. The problem is solved, if you can get good Governors for these oppressed provinces—men who will be just to the Christians, but not disloyal to the Porte—and who cannot be driven or dismissed by the corrupt intrigues of the seraglio.

I was very glad to read the cordial language you used towards Russia in your Aylesbury speech. Our best chance of coming to a peaceful issue of these perplexities is—in my belief—to come to an early understanding with Russia. Our danger is that we should make that result impossible by hanging on to the coat tails of Austria. Austria has good reasons for resisting the faintest approach to self-government in the revolted provinces. Her existence would be menaced if she were hedged on the south by a line of Russian satellites. But her existence is no longer of the importance to us that it was in former times. Her vocation in Europe is gone. She was a counterpoise to France and a barrier against Russia; but France is gone, and the development of Russia is chiefly in regions where Austria could not, and if she could would not, help to check it. We have no reason, therefore, for sharing Austria's tremors: and if we can get terms from Russia that suit us, it would be most unwise to reject them because they are not to the taste of Austria.

I venture to press this point, because I see that Austria is urging a return to a state of things in which the lives and property of the Christian populations of the three provinces will be dependent on the promises of the Porte: and that in this policy she will be backed by the advice of Buchanan and Elliot. I feel convinced that such an arrangement, though conformable to the pure Palmerston tradition, is not suitable for the exigency; and that it would not be supported in Parliament.

To Lord Salisbury.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 26, 1876.—. . . The 'Cabinet' was a hoax, or rather, perhaps, *un paragraphe hasardé*.

Notwithstanding the hullabaloo in which we still live, there really has been no question to submit to the Cabinet, and to have called them together unnecessarily, would have much injured us on the Continent, and even at home would

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only have given the impression that we were frightened and perplexed.

Derby has really only been working on the lines agreed on when we separated: the only difference is that, whether it were that he was piqued by being described as a Minister who never did anything, or whether he saw that golden opportunity, that, every now and then, occurs in public life, he has suddenly taken the conduct of affairs out of the hands of the other Powers, who, from various reasons, were indisposed to move, and has shown an energy and a resource and a firmness of purpose, wh. cannot be too highly praised, and for wh., much as I appreciated his many great qualities, I did not entirely give him credit.

But all that he has done as yet, or rather which he is still trying to do, is to carry thro' a successful mediation, and to obtain an armistice, and, in the shape of a protocol, to establish a basis of peace.

When he has done this, he will call us together, and then we will consider the means by which the preliminaries can be carried into effect. We are not, however, yet out of the wood. All depends upon Russia, and Russia cannot be trusted. It won't do, however, to tell her so, and I am working in the vein wh. you approve.

I think your idea well worthy of the deepest consideration as to some great officer at the metropolis to look after the interests of the rayahs.

Our great object, wh. Derby and myself have had during what Ld. Overstone calls 'a frantic ebullition of public excitement,' has never been to admit that we have changed our policy, and that we have adopted the views of the Opposition. This greatly irritates them, and *The Times* writes articles to prove that Lord Derby has changed his policy without knowing it. The force of impudence can't go much further.

If we had indulged in Bulgarian philippics, etc., etc., we might, to a certain degree, have checked the 'frantic ebullition,' but we should have become contemptible, and have soon fallen. You will see soon a great reaction. The conduct of the foreign Powers will alone occasion it, for they are all opposed to violent change. All the moneyed and commercial classes in all countries are against war: notably in London, where nobody will subscribe to the City Bulgarian Fund.

The new Sultan, I hear, really promises. He has got the Commons' blue book translated for him—and Forster's speech on 'atrocities.' He has only one wife: a *modiste* of Pera; a Belgian; he was in the habit of frequenting her shop, buying gloves, etc., and much admired her. One day he

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said, 'Do you think you would marry me?' and she replied 'Pourquoi non?' And it was done. It is she who has set him against seraglio life and all that: in short a Roxalana. Will he be a Solyman the Great?

A reign of three months had been sufficient to show that Sultan Murad was incompetent, if not insane; and on the last day of August a second palace revolution at Constantinople had deposed him in favour of his brother, the notorious Abdul Hamid. The hopefulness with which Beaconsfield regarded Abdul Hamid's elevation appears to us now to be extraordinarily shortsighted. But, after all, the whole European world, and in particular the Liberal party in England, committed a similar mistake when they welcomed the rise of the Young Turks to power in 1908; and Abdul Hamid not only made the usual fair professions, but was obviously a man of capacity and vigour.

Diplomacy, during August and September, waited on the issue of the fighting in the Balkans. Montenegro, as ever, maintained its cause bravely against the Turks. But, unless Serbia could make good, little Montenegro's effort would be of small avail. And the military adventure of Serbia, though it achieved some success at first, broke down in a few weeks before the superior power of the enemy. Accordingly she was ready in August for the armistice which England managed to secure for her in September. But the Porte, successful in the field, was not willing to grant easy terms to its foes, or more than a short suspension of hostilities. Derby proposed as a basis for discussion the kind of terms he had outlined to the City deputation; the *status quo* in Serbia and Montenegro, and local self-government for Bosnia and Bulgaria. Russia proceeded to show her hand by suggesting a military occupation of Bulgaria by Russia, and of Bosnia by Austria, together with a demonstration by the united fleets in the Bosphorus. As if in concert with this large demand, the Serbians renewed hostilities, and the situation became perceptibly more serious. There can be

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little doubt that both Russia and Serbia were misled by the clamour of the atrocity agitation in England, and expected a support here for extreme measures which was not forthcoming. As Beaconsfield said at Guildhall on Lord Mayor's Day:

An indignant burst of feeling in this country, excited by horrible events, created such a sensation and excitement that the people of Servia, and the friends of the people of Servia, really believed that the people of England had suddenly determined to give up the traditionary policy of the country which the eminent statesmen of Europe only five years ago —including the members of the late Government—thought so highly of; and Servia was induced to retract what she had expressed, and once more to engage in a sanguinary struggle which every friend of humanity must lament.

To Lord Derby.

Confidential. HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 29.—The Queen sent cyphered tel. yesterday, reverting to an idea, wh. she started some time ago, but wh. I did not encourage, of sending special envoy from herself, with a letter to E[mperor] of R[ussia]. . . .

She now recurs to it: my answer cyphered was brief. . . . I impressed upon Her Majesty, that the person to consult was yourself; because a diplomatic visit, however secret and private, or even a letter from her, might conflict with yr. plans and movements, who have all the threads in your hands. This reasoning was not cyphered.

I distinctly said to her, that if the E. of R. would be as peremptory with Servia, as he proposes to be with the Porte, all would be well.

I think you, and you alone, can decide upon the point. What[eve]r your decision, I shall, of course, support it, and you may assume, therefore, in yr. reply, that anything like a special Mission is not expedient. Whether it wd. do good, that she shd. write a letter to the Emperor, as she wrote to the Emperor of the French before the Italian war, is another thing. It wd. please her, and might do no harm: but what-[eve]r you think, I think.

I had written you a long letter yesterday congratulating you on yr. speech—wh. was perfect; and wh. induced *The Times* to throw over both Lowe and Gladstone specifically, showing, after all, we were exactly right.

But the Serv. tel. upset me. I don't see my way. If

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Austria step in to put an end to the conspiracy, the same reason that prevents Russia interfering herself, will force her to oppose Austria. There is war and a long one. France wants yet three years, and she will be delighted that those three years shd. be spent in the exhaustion of other Powers, and then she will come in fresh with ½ million of men.

I don't think we ought to join in the war, but I think, with an understanding with the Porte, we shd. occupy Const[antinop]le as 'a material guarantee.'

Everybody will be wanting something: even Italy. It is now or never with Bismarck, if he really wants peace.

Lord Derby to Queen Victoria.

FOREIGN OFFICE, *Sept.* 29, '76.—Lord Derby, with his humble duty, submits to your Majesty that the rupture by Servia of the suspension of hostilities agreed upon has introduced a new element of difficulty into the negotiations.

If the telegram in *The Times* is true, a general engagement is taking place on this day.

The Russian Ambassador speaks in strong terms of the want of good faith and respect to the Powers shown by Servia in this matter. He declares his belief that Prince Milan has been helpless in regard to it, General Tchernayeff being practically independent, and the Army so largely officered by Russians. Lord Derby owns he finds it hard to believe that the Russian volunteers, who have of late poured in at the rate, in one case, of 300 in a day, come without the tacit or implied consent of the Emperor. It is necessary at present to act as if we trusted Russia, for the present state of popular feeling makes all action in an anti-Russian sense practically impossible: but everything points to the probability that the Russian Government, while ostensibly promoting peace, are by indirect means making it impossible. Such is evidently the view entertained in Austria, and, Lord Derby thinks, to some extent in Germany also. But while Lord Derby states this as a matter of fact, and expresses his opinion, he must own that he has nothing to suggest. Appeals to the Emperor would produce assurances of goodwill and peaceable intentions; which are seldom wanting: but the agents of General Kaufmann are at work in Cabul, and probably there is no place where Russian influence can be used to weaken that of other Powers where similar means are not being employed.

Lord Derby had written so far when your Majesty's telegram of to-day reached him. He had telegraphed to Lord Beaconsfield on the subject of it, on receiving the telegram of yesterday, and awaits Lord Beaconsfield's answer:

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but he is bound to say that he has not much faith in the result of personal appeals. It is simply inconceivable that the Emperor of Russia—though he may choose to shut his eyes to details—can be ignorant of all that is doing in his name.

Lord Derby may add that he believes the officers who join Tchernayeff have received informal, but sufficient, promises that the commissions which they are obliged to resign on taking foreign service will be given back to them on their return. This cannot be done without the Emperor's knowledge.

To Lord Derby.

Private. HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 30, 1876.—I will come up to you, when it is ripe. I only asked you here, as I thought it might be a beneficial change for yourself.

I know you are bored going to any place, wh. is natural, but I was quite alone, or shd. not have asked you.

The Russians have behaved very badly. In future, they must have not only Ambassadors for their Emperors, but for their adventurous Generals, who have secret orders—but it is never any use to complain. We must see whether we may not be able to make a move, wh. may checkmate Gortchakoff.

I assume that, somehow or other, European Turkey will be invaded—but they must make a proposal first, and the Cabinet must decide upon it. That's quite clear.

I wrote in the sense you mention to the Queen this afternoon: I inferred you wished me. But a line from you would be acceptable; you are in great favor, which pleases, and amuses, me.

Keep up yr. spirits. You have shown some of the highest qualities of public life, and I believe the great mass of the nation believe in you.

We may yet confound their politics.

From Lord Derby.

Private. KESTON, *Oct.* 1, '76.—A thousand thanks for your cordial note. One really wants encouragement just now. I sometimes feel like the juryman who complained of having been sitting along with eleven of the most obstinate men he ever met. But we are fairly well supported in the press, which I suspect is a better test than provincial meetings, *Pall Mall*, *Telegraph*, *Post*, and *Standard*—for; *Times* uncertain and trimming; only *D. News* and *Echo* against us.

Foreigners don't know what to make of the movement; and I am not surprised. . . .

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To Sir Stafford Northcote.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 30.—. . . Derby has shown, throughout this business of the negotiations, the utmost energy and resource. A clear head, the clearest, and a sound judgment I always gave him credit for; but I feel I never did him sufficient justice—much and long as I have appreciated him—for his vigor, his action, and his fertility. I fear all thrown away. His hands have been fatally weakened by the lowest arts of faction abusing the noble enthusiasm of a great portion of the people. But we must be patient. The solution of this vast question will be long, the English people will come to their senses, and we may yet retrieve and regain our position.

You have made some capital speeches, and so far as the agitation is concerned, it has well introduced you to the country in your new position.[1] . . .

[1] Of Leader of the House of Commons.

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CHAPTER III.

The Constantinople Conference.

1876-1877.

As summer passed into autumn, Beaconsfield's and Derby's diplomacy became more and more concentrated on a policy of armistice first, and conference afterwards. It was of the highest importance to put an end to hostilities between Turkey and Serbia, with so much combustible material about. On the one hand was Russia, proposing, not to say threatening, armed occupation of Turkey; and, on the other, the Porte, determined to exploit the favourable position of its victorious armies to the utmost. The Cabinet met at the beginning of October, and decided, while rejecting the Russian proposal, to put strong pressure upon the Porte to grant at once that substantial armistice which Serbia and her friends had demanded. An armistice once granted, it was proposed that arrangements should be made for the meeting of a European Conference.

To Lady Bradford.

Hughenden Manor, *Monday morning* [*Oct.* 2, 1876].—. . . I have summoned the Cabinet for Wednesday; I go up to town to-morrow. Whitehall Gardens are in the hands of workmen, painters especially, wh. wd. kill me; so I have ordered a camp-bed in D. S., and, like a true leader, shall sleep on the field of battle.

It is likely the Turkish reply will arrive before, or about, Wednesday, and the Cabinet therefore will be at hand: but it is necessary that it shd. meet irrespective of that contingency. The position of affairs never was more critical or more difficult. I don't believe the Russians have any money to make war, but they cannot resist what, according to their own language, 'they never had before; England on their side.'

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Is it? As Hamlet saith, 'that is the question.' All I know is that England won't subscribe. The City meeting, wh. was to produce instantaneously £50,000, after weeks of touting does not count much more than £5—and that produced by the knaves, or fools, who got up the gathering: even . . . Lady Strangford shrieks at the ineffective answer to her appeal, . . . while Monty's righteous uncle, . . . Lord Shaftesbury, who began the nonsense, announces that after two or 3 months of agitation his fund only amounts to £147 6 0, and that there is no hope of more. . . .

10, Downing Street, *Oct.* 5.—. . . Nothing can be more critical or more interesting than the position. Gortchakoff, misled by Gladstone and Co., has made a false move, and his proposal for Russia to occupy Bulgaria, the very heart and most precious portion of European Turkey, with Constantinople almost in sight of the contemplated frontier, has roused and alarmed John Bull. Your friend, *The Times*, ratted this morning. It was like the verdict after the long trial of the Claimant.[1]

England looks upon the proposed occupation by Russia as a real Bulgarian atrocity. When he sounded Austria on the point, Austria enquired, What will England say? G[ortchakoff] answered instantly, 'England will certainly agree.' Instead of that, I sent Schouvaloff off with a flea in his ear; told him it was a double violation of treaties, etc., etc., and that Russia must take the consequences, wh. wd. be most grave. Austria gave another kick, and the thing has collapsed. But what will happen next I can't tell you. Constantinople is in such a state of excitement that I fear the people won't obey the Sultan, who seems, as I anticipated, a real man. . . .

Hughenden Manor, *Oct.* 7.—. . . I came down yesterday, and Derby went to Keston, a cottage he has, ten miles or ess from town: we can be there in a moment. . . .

Oct. 10.—. . . I can't give you good news. I think, in the most favorable view, it's a toss up. If Turkey accepts our proposal, Russia wd. be at least for the time checkmated. But if Turkey refuse, I think Russia will declare war. I think Gortchakoff wants war.

The only good thing is the improved feeling in England; but, I fear, it's too late.

I read an amusing private letter from Const. this morning. Hartington, it seems, highly disapproves of Gladstone's pamphlets and Lowe's speeches. He, and the Duke of Manchester, were on the following day to have their audience

[1] The Tichborne Claimant.

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of the Sultan, and the Dss. was to see all the palaces. The day before there had been a grand dinner at Safvet Pasha, the Secy. of State for For. Affairs, and who speaks English. The Duchess dined there, tho' there was no other lady. The letter-writer, who was one of the guests, says that did not seem at all to embarrass her Grace; 'she lit her segar from that of Midhat Pasha, and showed the utmost *aplomb*.' To the life! . . .

Confidential. Oct. 12.—. . . I could not write yesterday. I was so anxious and so uncertain. It was a neck-and-neck race.

We had taken a decided step—many thought a rash one. Elliot was to tell the Porte that the recommendation of the armistice by England was England's last step; that, if refused, she shd. attempt no longer to arrest the destruction of the Turkish Empire, but leave her to her fate; and that our Ambassador wd. leave Constantinople.

There were great, and just, objections to this course, because, when an Ambassador retires, he cannot reappear. All personal influence is lost, and in 1829, the last time when the Embassies left Constantinople, war between Russia and Turkey instantly ensued.

And yet affairs had come to such a pass, thro' the conduct of Gladstone and Co., that it was necessary to try this last card—and it succeeded! But I did not know, till late last night, that Servia had accepted. I think now all is safe for some time.

The Porte has been crafty, I shd. rather say very wise and clever, in enlarging the proposal, and making the arm[istice] for 5 or 6 months. This will give us breathing time. I don't think any Power will dare to disturb the European peace while an arm. exists. By that time, too, the people of England will have quite recovered their senses, and I hope Gladstone will be shut up. I feel much relieved, and tho' there are plenty of difficulties before me, the great oppression of the last six or seven weeks is removed. . . .

Beaconsfield's satisfaction and relief were altogether premature. Serbia, and Serbia's great friend, Russia, refused to accept a half-year's armistice, on the plausible ground that the Principality could not keep its army on a war footing for such a length of time without putting too severe a strain on its resources.

Looking round during this autumn for a stable basis for British policy amid all the shifting sands of diplomacy,

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Beaconsfield came to the conclusion that a clear understanding with Bismarck, and a treaty with Germany, on the basis of the *status quo*, was the best available means of calming the disquiet of Europe, and preventing constant alarms and probable wars. He wrote in this sense to the Queen, to Derby, and to Salisbury; and their reception of his idea was generally sympathetic.

To Lord Derby.

Confidential. HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Oct.* 17.—Nothing can be more unsatisfactory, than the whole state of Europe—and Asia too—in a great degree.

Russia is full of mischief, and yet 'willing to wound and yet afraid to strike.' That's her finance: still, she will go trying it on, trusting to no physical opposition, till she, as before, commits herself.

Can't we take advantage of the delay, and make some arrangement, wh. will put an end to these *misères*, and set the world to rights?

What if we could negotiate a treaty with Germany to maintain the present *status quo* generally? Not an alliance offensive and defensive, as Brunnow offered to yr. father in 1852—and wh. was wisely and promptly declined; but a treaty for the maintenance of the *status quo*. This wd. make us easy about Constantinople, and relieve Bismarck of his real bugbear, the eventual alliance of England and France, and the loss of his two captured provinces. We don't wish France to be weaker than she is; but when she was stronger, she gave us plenty of trouble.

The objection, or rather difficulty, in bringing this about, wd. be, perhaps, the old German Emperor, who, I heartily wish, were in the same cave as Friedrich Barbarossa; but tho' he might shrink from a war with his nephew, or anything obviously hostile, with time, and management, and firmness, Bis. cd. succeed, I think, in the *status quo* treaty.

The difficulty is to get hold of Bis. I counted on Odo Russell, but he might as well be at Bagdad. And Münster is not a genial nature to work on. He is suspicious and stupid.

Still, I think, the thing ought to be done, and it wd. settle everything for our lives, and immortalise yourself.

Here we have the germ of the policy which was brought into actual working by Beaconsfield at the Congress of

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Berlin, and which was pursued by him, and by Salisbury after him, until at the close of the nineteenth century the ambitious aims of the German Empire made further co-operation on the same footing impossible. There was never, of course, any alliance, and it is strange that Beaconsfield should have contemplated a formal treaty—a step which would have involved a permanent estrangement from France, whom he always preferred, and had long cherished, as an ally. But there was a steady reliance by the British Foreign Office on the Central Powers; a working arrangement which, so long as Russia was aggressive and France restless, and so long as Germany was content with industrial and commercial development, preserved peace in Europe, at least among the greater States.

But Bismarck, though he never forgave Gortchakoff for interfering to save France in the spring of 1875, was not yet disposed to weaken the bonds which united Germany to Russia. Moreover, it was by no means clear to foreign observers whether Beaconsfield could maintain his ground against Gladstone's agitation. Accordingly, in answer to Derby's appeal to him to use the influence of Germany 'in order to procure the acceptance of some compromise,' Bismarck replied that, though an armistice of six months seemed acceptable to the German Government, he could not put pressure on any other Power to secure its sanction.

To Queen Victoria.

(*Telegraphed in Cypher.*) 10, DOWNING ST., *Oct.* 19, '76.—The Cabinet decided, that 'they would take no further steps in negotiations for armistice, tho,' if Turkey assented to a proposal to shorten it, they would make no opposition. They decided, that Lord Derby should draw up a despatch reciting that Servia had appealed to us to mediate, that we undertook the office and succeeded, that then Servia rejected the armistice which we had solicited for her; that we should protest against the military emigration of Russia into Servia, and end by warning Russia that a violation of the Treaty of Paris by the occupation of Bulgaria would lead to serious consequences.

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Friedrichsruh. 13 July 1878

From the signed photograph presented by Prince Bismarck to the Earl of Beaconsfield at the Berlin Congress.

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To Lady Bradford.

10, Downing St., *Oct.* 20, 1876.—. . . We had a Cabinet yesterday, wh. then dispersed, from wh. the world infers we are unanimous, and that there is no split. . . .

In a talk with a political and personal friend Beaconsfield expounded his view of the present situation and his hopes for the future.

Memorandum by Lord Barrington.

Oct. 23, 1876.—I had an interview with Lord Beaconsfield this evening at 5.30. He entered rather fully into the details of the present crisis in the East. Alluding to his speech at Aylesbury, he utterly repudiated having ever said that the 'Government was opposed to the feelings of a majority in the country.' The report of that speech in *The Times* of Sept. 21, ought to be enough to show the utter fallacy of such a statement. Yet this has constantly, and persistently, been asserted by Messrs. Gladstone and Lowe, and this assertion has done immense harm in retarding negotiations with Foreign Powers on this question. Lord Beaconsfield's statement that the Government had not the 'unanimous' support of the country, but that a large party in the country was using the 'atrocity cry' for party purposes (or words to that effect), was quite true.

The present state of affairs in the East is that England advised 'an armistice of *not less* than a month or six weeks.' The Turks replied that six weeks was too short, and proposed 'five or six months.' This the Russians refused to accept, and reverted to what they termed the English proposal of 'six weeks.' But England had put no extending limit, and had guarded herself by 'not less.' Consequently England accepted the Turkish proposal. Russia never imagined that Turkey would accept any armistice, and therefore finds herself in a difficulty. The Turks have now, in all probability at the instance of our Ambassador, Sir H. Elliot, averred themselves willing to accept the English proposal, with the understanding that the six weeks' armistice may be prolonged if necessary.

Lord Beaconsfield has great hopes of being able to settle this great question, but of course guarded himself against any opinion as to Peace or War. Supposing the Russians to enter Bulgaria, said I. That, he answered, would be an entirely new phase of the question. He is evidently quite

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determined that the Russians shall not directly, or indirectly, become possessed of Constantinople.

Many in England say, Why not? England might take Egypt, and so secure our highway to India.

But the answer is obvious, said Lord B. If the Russians had Constantinople, they could at any time march their Army through Syria to the mouth of the Nile, and then what would be the use of our holding Egypt? Not even the command of the sea could help us under such circumstances. People who talk in this manner must be utterly ignorant of geography. Our strength is on the sea. Constantinople is the key of India, and not Egypt and the Suez Canal.

The mendacity of the Russians is the same as ever. They say, 'We do not wish to hold Constantinople.' Perhaps not, but for all that their game is to have someone there who is more or less dependent on them. . . .

The grand political duel between Lord Beaconsfield and Prince Gortchakoff has now lasted some months, and, up to the present time, the latter has got the worst of it. That England should be victorious in diplomacy (and war if necessary, as a matter of course), is Lord B.'s grand object, and will be a splendid consummation to his wonderful career. He appears to me to have no doubt that, whatever present appearances may be, Germany will eventually go against Russia. . . .

The six months' armistice which Turkey proposed having been rejected, the Turkish armies continued their advance and, in spite of all the efforts of the Russian General and the Russian Volunteers who organised the resistance to them under the banner of Serbia, won success after success until Belgrade itself was in danger. Beaconsfield flattered himself that these Turkish victories, coupled with the firm attitude of the British Cabinet, had produced a moderating effect on the counsels of the Russian Government, as Gortchakoff began to express interest in the Conference which Derby had suggested, and Ignatieff at Constantinople seemed to be ready for a reasonable compromise about the length of armistice. Appearances were deceptive. The Turkish successes convinced the Emperor Alexander that, if Serbia was to be saved, he must interpose at once, and on the last day of the month his Ambassador presented an ultimatum

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at Constantinople, demanding, under the threat of a total severance of diplomatic relations, the acceptance by Turkey, within forty-eight hours, of the armistice limited to a month or six weeks. Under the menace of force Turkey agreed.

To Lady Bradford.

10, DOWNING STREET, *Oct.* 28, 1876.—There is a streak of light on the horizon. Whether it be the victory of the Turks, or whether it be that the Russians commence to comprehend that England will stand no nonsense, but a great change occurred last night—and for the better. . . .

Oct. 30.—We are not out of the wood, but we sometimes think we see light in the distance—I hope not a mirage. I have had now nearly a quarter of a year of it, and feel a good deal older. Certainly, it has not been a dull life, but a very hard one. . . .

Schou. called on me with a message of horror and indignation from the Emperor of R. about the *Golos*. I said I was under the impression that the press was not free in Russia. He assured me that he had been libelled himself in the *Golos*, and accused of having sold himself to Germany. I remarked that the press was free in England, but that if such an article had appeared in a respectable paper agst. Prince Gortff., I wd. undertake to say I wd. have made the editor apologise.[1]

Nov. 1.—Yesterday (Tuesday) I received two tels. when I woke: they had arrived in the night. One was from our Ambassador at Livadia saying that P. Gortchakoff considered the armistice now settled, and making suggestions about ulterior points—and much more important ones: the basis of the Conference. The other telegram was from our Ambassador at Constantinople, dated Monday night ½ past 10 o'ck. (Therapia), saying that the armistice was settled—very satisfactorily and honorably to the Turks, that Ignatieff had

[1] The *Golos* had had the effrontery to accuse Beaconsfield of having, in conjunction with the firm of Erlanger, amassed a colossal fortune by speculating on the various phases of the Eastern Question! Whereas, as Rose, who had been familiar with Beaconsfield's pecuniary dealings for thirty years, wrote indignantly to Corry on Oct. 25, 'if ever a man lived who was pure as snow in money matters, and more scrupulous than any living man in everything that concerned his pecuniary interests, it is Lord B[eaconsfiel]d: as history will prove.' In spite of Schouvaloff's assurances, the *Golos* felt it so necessary to damage the reputation of the most determined opponent of Russia's Turkish policy, that it reiterated its scandalous charges. 'The fact,' wrote Corry to Schouvaloff, 'that this repetition is made after the gracious message wh. on behalf of the Emperor of Russia you last week conveyed to Lord Beaconsfield much aggravates the calumny.'

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been conciliatory throughout, and that he was to execute it formally in the morning, having an appointment with the G. Vizier to that effect.

So I thought my cares were over, and I remembered what your friend Delane said to me on Sunday, 'that the Minister who opened Parliamt. with an announcement of peace in the Queen's Speech, wd. be in a prouder position than any Minister since Mr. Pitt.'

A little after noon came the awful news that Genl. Ignatieff had received orders from Livadia to deliver the offensive and hostile ultimatum you are now well acquainted with!

This was the consequence of the Turkish victories, and the humiliation the Emperor felt at the probability of the Turks reaching Belgrade. The pretext that the Turks carried on hostilities during negotiations for armistice is quite hollow. The Russo-Servian army has never ceased attacking and harassing the Turks during the whole time. Besides, negotiations for armistice never suspend hostilities as a matter of public law.

What will happen now? I think it looks as black as possible. The whole affair has been a conspiracy of Russia from the beginning, and she has failed in everything—even in active warfare the Porte has defeated her. I don't think she can stand it, and she will rush to further reverses.

Yesterday I dined at S[tafford] House—with the little Duchess, and the 'bride and bridegroom'[1] and Ronald; and then they took me to the play, a new comedy that is making some noise, *Peril*—an adaptation from the French *Nos Intimes*—not over-moral, but fairly transmogrified from the original, and cleverly acted in the chief part—a woman[2] whom, I doubt not, you, an *habituée* of the drama, know very well, but quite new to me. Now she is married, but she was a sister of Robertson, the playwright. She had evidently studied in the French school. The whole was good, and the theatre was ventilated; so I did not feel exhausted, and was rather amused, and shd. rather have enjoyed myself, had not the bad news thrown its dark shadow over one's haunted consciousness. . . .

Nov. 2.—As I have often told you 'there is no gambling like politics'—and here we are with the armistice signed! . . . I can't write any details: until this moment, I have not had a moment of pause—4 and 20 hours indeed of awful crisis.

'How can we ever trust the Russians?' was the Queen's comment to Beaconsfield on what she termed

[1] Mr. (now Viscount) and the late Lady Florence Chaplin.
[2] Mrs. Kendal.

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the Emperor's 'rash and intemperate act.' The Emperor must have felt the need of reassuring English opinion, for on November 2 he pledged his word at Livadia to the British Ambassador that he had not the smallest wish or intention to acquire Constantinople, and that any occupation of Bulgaria to which necessity might drive him would be only provisional. Derby telegraphed the satisfaction of the Cabinet at these assurances, but Beaconsfield was more impressed by the obvious preparations which Russia was making for independent military action, and by Gortchakoff's hectoring tone about the proposals for autonomy to be submitted to the Porte. For, now that the armistice was signed, Beaconsfield and Derby proposed to issue invitations to the Conference which they had for some time contemplated—a step which was taken by a Cabinet Council on November 4. For the chief representative of Great Britain at the Conference the Prime Minister selected the ablest of his younger colleagues, overcoming his reluctance by friendly pressure. Among the Beaconsfield papers there is preserved an undated sheet of Downing Street writing-paper, with the words, in Beaconsfield's handwriting: '*Conf[identia]l.* I want you to go. That is my idea. A great enterprise, and wd. not take much time. B.,' followed by Salisbury's response, 'Of course I will do what the Cabinet wishes, but it is essential that your policy should be settled first.' These notes were almost certainly interchanged at this meeting of the Cabinet.

To Lord Derby.

Confidential. 10, DOWNING ST., WHITEHALL, *Nov.* 3, '76.—I shall call to-day latish, on the chance of seeing you, as I think we ought to confer together before the Cabinet.

In the meanwhile, reflection has only confirmed me in my conviction, that it wd. be most unwise for us to be hurried into any proceedings; that we shd. principally be represented by someone of great authority, not mixed up with the previous transactions; and that we shd. come to an agreement, before the meeting of the Congress, as to the basis of our negotiations.

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I foresee endless chicanery on the part of Russia, who is, at present, somewhat baffled and mortified.

I think a *sine qua non* on our part shd. be, that no interference shd. be sanctioned with the military arrangements of the Porte in Bulgaria, or indeed Bosnia, etc.

Turkey cd. maintain 200,000 men between the Danube and Constantinople, and with this force, and the command of the sea, she is, so far as Russia is concerned, invincible. This is consistent with her maintaining 100,000 men on her Asiatic frontier.

And now, again, I must impress upon you the importance, if we wish to secure a long peace, of coming to some understanding with some European Power.

The difficulties of negotiating any satisfactory understanding with Germany may be great, but Odo Russell ought to be instructed to lose no opportunity of conferring with Bismarck in this sense. By the bye, I do not at all believe Ignatieff's 'confidential' communication to Elliot about the German Chanr.

But without the trouble, and the risk, of any new treaties, we have a course open to us, wh. I think it imprudent, and scarcely justifiable on our part, to neglect. It is not only our right, but, in my opinion, our duty, to enquire of France and Austria, what, in the event of the failure of the Congress, are their views and feelings with reference to their engagements under the Tripartite Treaty ?

This will give Austria, if she wishes it, an occasion to unburthen or unbutton herself—and may lead to important consequences. I do not understand from you, and I do not hear from any other quarter, that you have ever made to her, howr. guarded, any overture for joint action. I believe it has been expected. If made, it shd. be expressed thro' Buchanan, not Beust, but it wd. be more conveniently managed with reference to keeping existing engagements: the Tripartite.

It is probable that France, at this moment, wd. avoid action, but that reserve on her part will not subsist as long as she thinks, if troublous times arrive. And she wd. be gratified by the enquiry and the appeal, and if it did nothing else, with regard to both France and Austria, I think it wd. have an advantageous effect on both of them in influencing their conduct in the Conference.

I have no hesitation myself in saying, that it wd. be most desirable to arrive at a clear agreement with Austria for joint action, and that, if the Conference fail, and Russia is arrogant and menacing, it shd. at once be intimated to Russia that the integrity of the Turkish dominions shd. not be violated.

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Nov. 4.—I do not think that Gortchakoff's insolent announcements to Loftus, that, if the Russian propositions respecting autonomy are not agreed to, Ignatieff is to withdraw, ought to pass unnoticed.

This was not said after dinner, like the Emperor's sentimental ebullition—but it was said in the morning, and was an announcement to us.

It shd. be noticed we gain nothing with Russia by conciliation or concession.

If Gortchakoff's position is a genuine one, then there is no use in conferring. At any rate, he shd. privately inform us what are his views.

Loftus, tho' a mere Livadian parasite, and afraid even of G.'s shadow, will, I suppose, still obey absolute orders, and I think you ought to send him a rattler.

Your complaints of Andrassy are echoed back from Vienna as against us. There, it is the fashion to say that England will do nothing and join them in no action.

Nothing can secure the success of the Conference but firmness on our side, and we cannot be firm, unless we are prepared for the future.

Our policy hitherto has secured the first object proposed by us: viz., the maintenance of the integrity of the Ott. Empire. The refusal of the Berlin note, and the fleet, have hitherto accomplished that. There has been no 'occupation.' For the second object proposed, the amelioration of the condition of the rayahs, we ought to arrive, among ourselves, at some clear conception of your definition of autonomy with[ou]t loss of time.

A catalogue of the proposals in the Andrassy note, in language as little technical as possible, shd., if possible, be before the Cabinet this morning.

To Lady Bradford.

10, Downing St., *Nov.* 4.—Cabinet just over; very tired, and a little harassed—but I won't let the post go without a line.

We have agreed to invite the Powers to a Conference; the place, Constantinople; and each Power to be represented by two Plenipotentiaries. I assume the Ambassador at Constantinople, and six greater men, what you call *swells*. Who is to go for England? I have a good mind to go myself.

How will it all end? So many plots and counterplots and such Machiavellian brains to deal with! . . .

Nov. 8.—The appointment of Ld. Salisbury as Ambassador Extra[ordinar]y to the Conference seems to give great satis-

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faction. I do not despair, if the Conference take place, that we may succeed in our main purposes, but what I dread is that Russia will secretly encourage and invite the Porte to refuse the Conference, and then privately arrange with her. I have detected some traits of this intrigue, and Ignatieff is equal to anything.

By proposing a Conference on a broader basis—*i.e.*, two Ambassadors or Plenipotentiaries from each State—a certain delay has been obtained, and a proportionately greater importance has been given to the Conference—wh. may balk him. But if his original proposition of an immediate council of the Ambassadors at Constantinople and none else had been agreed to, I think he wd. have succeeded. He may yet.

Ld. Mayor's Day.—. . . Yes, it is the fatal day, that always makes me ill—when I have to make a speech wh. is ever strictly scanned and wh., on this occasion, will be criticised by all Europe: sent on the wings of the lightning to the old coxcomb at Livadia (wh. he has left by-the-bye) and the fox at Varzin.

It is about as nervous an affair as can fall to the lot of man—particularly when it is to be accomplished in a heated hall, full of gas and aldermen and trumpeters, after sitting for hours talking slipslop to a defunct Lady Mayoress, and with every circumstance that can exhaust and discomfort man. I think I will never do it again, and should not be able to do it now, were it not for the hope of seeing you to-morrow.

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING STREET, WHITEHALL, *Nov.* 9, 1876.—. . . To-day is 'Lord Mayor's Day,' always the most distressful day in the year to Lord Beaconsfield, but, this year, his sense of discomfort and nervousness are aggravated. He must speak on the great question, and every word he utters will be criticised throughout Europe. However, it is something, that he can mention even a prospect of peace. He feels, at this moment, as if he should hardly get through the day, and the only thing which sustains him is the desire not to disgrace your Majesty's service and confidence. . . .

It is noteworthy that Beaconsfield should have written to the Queen of the speech which he was about to deliver at Guildhall as one suggesting a prospect of peace. Such, fairly construed, it seems in historical retrospect to have been, but his domestic critics at the time insisted that its tone was one of warlike defiance. Undoubtedly it

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contained a grave warning, which can hardly be thought unjustified in view of the policy of combined intrigue and menace which Russia had pursued during the year. But he was careful to speak of her with due respect, and to attribute to her a cordiality and a readiness to accept reasonable proposals of which she had in fact shown little sign. He described the great objects which the Government had set before themselves to be, first, to maintain the general peace of Europe by the due observance of the Treaties of 1856 and 1871, which laid down as the best security for peace the preservation of the independence and territorial integrity of the Turkish Empire, and, secondly, to secure such an amelioration of the condition of the subjects of Turkish provinces as, by increasing their prosperity, would promote that independence and integrity. He expressed his satisfaction at the armistice; 'an armistice is certainly not peace any more than courtship is wedlock; but in general it is the auspicious harbinger of a happy future.' As to the 'ultimatum' by which it was obtained, 'that is an ugly word when we are endeavouring to bring about a pacific settlement.' But in this case the ultimatum was something like 'bringing an action for debt when the whole sum claimed had previously been paid into court.'

Beaconsfield dwelt with satisfaction on the Conference and on its acceptance by all the Powers, and paid a generous compliment to Salisbury, who, he said, possessed the complete confidence of his colleagues.

> They have confidence in his abilities, in his grasp of the subject, and in the tact and firmness of his character; and I have no doubt that he will use and exercise all his abilities to bring about that permanent peace in Europe which all statesmen agree can best be secured by adhering to the treaties which exist, knowing well—and none knows better than my noble friend—that the independence and territorial integrity of Turkey are not to be secured by mere pen-and-ink work. Unless the great body of the people find that they are under a Government which studies their welfare and is proud of their prosperity, even the independence and integrity of a country must themselves vanish.

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Then followed the passage which excited so much attention and provoked so much criticism.

I am hopeful, in the present temper of Europe, we shall be able to accomplish the objects we have in view without those terrible appeals to war, of which, I think, we have heard too frequently and too much. . . . There is no country so interested in the maintenance of peace as England. Peace is especially an English policy. She is not an aggressive Power, for there is nothing which she desires. She covets no cities and no provinces. What she wishes is to maintain and to enjoy the unexampled empire which she has built up, and which it is her pride to remember exists as much upon sympathy as upon force. But although the policy of England is peace, there is no country so well prepared for war as our own. If she enters into conflict in a righteous cause—and I will not believe that England will go to war except for a righteous cause—if the contest is one which concerns her liberty, her independence, or her empire, her resources, I feel, are inexhaustible. She is not a country that, when she enters into a campaign, has to ask herself whether she can support a second or a third campaign. She enters into a campaign which she will not terminate till right is done.

It was not Beaconsfield, but Russia, who had made the 'appeals to war' of which he spoke. And his reply only restated, in grave and forcible fashion, the permanent conditions which those who challenge this country must face. He had recounted them in almost similar language in 1862, when he was in opposition. He had then said that 'England is the only country which, when it enters into a quarrel which it believes to be just, never ceases its efforts until it has accomplished its aim'; that 'it was not a question of one, two, or three campaigns, but that, as we have proved in old days, our determination, supported by our resources, would allow us to prepare for an indefinite struggle when we had an adequate and worthy object in view.'[1] The words remain as true now as when they were spoken in 1862 and in 1876; and most Englishmen to-day will heartily endorse them. Whether the occasion in 1876 was a fitting one on which to repeat

[1] See Vol. IV., pp. 310, 311.

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them as Prime Minister at Guildhall is, of course, an arguable question. But Russia's menacing attitude undoubtedly suggested that she had either forgotten England's historic power and persistence, or believed that the ancient spirit was dead. The very next day the Emperor Alexander, in an address to the nobles and communal council of Moscow, caused a sensation in Europe by saying that, if the Conference failed to bring peace, and if he could not obtain the guarantees which he desired from the Porte, he was firmly resolved to take independent action and that he was convinced that Russia would respond to his summons. The leaders of the atrocity agitation saw in this threat the natural, and indeed legitimate, retort to what they considered to be Beaconsfield's wanton provocation. In actual fact, the Emperor, when he spoke, had no cognisance of Beaconsfield's words, and was only saying openly what Gortchakoff, his Chancellor, had already intimated to the British Ambassador; and the Russian Government proceeded to mobilise a considerable force and to issue a new loan for 100,000,000 roubles. 'What an infamous *lie* that was,' wrote the Queen to Beaconsfield on November 21, 'to say the Emperor Alexander's speech at Moscow was in consequence of Lord Beaconsfield's excellent one at the Mansion House [? Guildhall].'

While those responsible for the atrocity agitation were indignant with Beaconsfield for his Guildhall speech, they cordially approved the appointment of Salisbury as British representative at the Constantinople Conference. They remembered the deep-seated distrust of Disraeli which Salisbury had long cherished; they knew that he was a High Churchman, a friend of those High Churchmen, such as Liddon, who took a leading part in the agitation; they noticed that Carnarvon, who had formerly acted with Salisbury in breaking from Disraeli, made no secret of his general sympathy with the agitators; and they hoped, if not for an open breach between Beaconsfield and his Indian Secretary, at least for action

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by Salisbury at Constantinople in fundamental agreement with Gladstone and his policy. Undoubtedly Salisbury was keenly alive to the duty of securing tolerable government for Christians in Turkey—that was a main reason for his appointment; but some selections from Ministerial correspondence will show how far his course in the Ministry was from justifying the exaggerated expectations of Gladstone's partisans.

To Lord Salisbury.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Oct.* 17, 1876.—. . . As you are a particular friend of Carnarvon's, I will make a confidential observation. He is distinguished by his hospitality, but is not always, perhaps, so discreet in its exercise, as might be desired.

Poor dear Lady Chesterfield, when she was much under his roof, was very annoyed at constantly dining with the editor of the *Spectator*, who, she said, wrote weekly libels on her dearest friend (myself); but I, being used to that sort of treatment, mitigated her feelings, and, I believe, prevented any serious *esclandre*. But now, no less a personage than the stoic Derby is annoyed, and more than annoyed, by the same cause.

It seems that Liddon made a 'most acrimonious' attack on Derby, and he is now a cherished guest at Highclere! I believe it was in a sermon, and I was, of course, included in it, but, tho' I see most things, it escaped me, and I should not have noticed it, had I encountered it, except perhaps a little rap some day. . . .

From Lord Salisbury.

Confidential. HATFIELD HOUSE, *Oct.* 18, '76.—. . . I agree with you that it is unfortunate that Carnarvon should have asked Liddon at this particular time, when everyone is on the watch for the slightest indication of division of opinion in the Cabinet—as it may be misconstrued. But the friendship is a very old one: and Liddon usually goes to Highclere just before the Oxford term. I don't suppose the construction which might be put on it ever occurred to Carnarvon's mind. . . .

To Lord Derby.

Confidl. 10, DOWNING ST., WHITEHALL, *Nov.* 1, '76.—I return you Carnarvon's letter, and your reply, wh. is *admirable*. You pierced the Jesuits. What with Manning and

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Lyddon (*sic*),[1] and the Archbishop of Belgrade, our colleague is getting a little insufferable.

It is a gang of Jesuits that he lives amongst, in many guises, from priests to journalists.

The only authentic *mot* of Gladstone, that I have ascertained, was that he said the other day, that he was confident that Carnarvon, Salisbury, Hardy, and Northcote wd. never support our policy. I believe no one is the least hesitating except Carnarvon, and ultimately he is ruled by Salisbury. . . .

Nov. 19.—I hear from Salisbury, that there is great discontent and disturbance at the 'Instructions'[2] having been sent down for the Queen's signature when Ld. Carnarvon, Ld. Chancellor, and others did not consider, that they had passed the Cabinet. What is to be done? They understood they were to be again considered on Thursday.

I have sent Mr. Corry to Ld. Chanr. to explain, that I doubted not you were under the impression that the general Instructions were approved, and that the supplementary ones were those to be considered on Thursday. But it is difficult to argue with men under the influence of strong religious feeling, and it wd. appear that the heresy of Photius, commonly called the Greek Church, and Moody and Sankey, have coalesced against us. . . .

From Lord Derby.

Private. FAIRHILL, TONBRIDGE, *Nov.* 19, '76.—There can be no mistake as to what passed in Cabinet yesterday. It was clearly understood that the instructions were approved, the cause of nearly all the difficulty having been removed by the insertion of the words suggested by Cairns, which only excluded from discussion *in the Conference* the question of military occupation, leaving it an open question whether such occupation might not be agreed upon by the Powers in certain possible contingencies. This was to be made clear by a supplementary instruction which was to be considered at the Cabinet of Thursday. I heard all that passed, and naturally attended more closely than anyone, the business concerning my department. It had never occurred to me, till I received your letter, that any of our colleagues could be under a different impression. . . .

I was prepared for Carnarvon taking the line he has taken, but regret the Chancellor having followed his lead. The question at issue is really serious: and I do not see how we can give way upon it. . . .

[1] Beaconsfield, never very accurate in his spelling of proper names, seems to have written indifferently 'Liddon' or 'Lyddon.'

[2] For the Constantinople Conference.

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To Lord Derby.

Confidential. 2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *Nov.* 20.—You wisely got away, in legitimate dudgeon, to a distant fortress; but I was obliged to meet the storm, and therefore sent for the Ld. Chancellor, and, after some time, concluded a satisfactory interview.

He had no previous concert, or conversation, with that little Carnarvon, and when I explained to him the mysteries of the heresy of Photius, and that he had, I was sure unintentionally, lent himself to a sacerdotal intrigue, he turned quite pale.

I told him, that if the sentiment of religious enthusiasm, or the principle of ecclesiastical supremacy, were brought into play, the satisfactory settlement of a purely political question, wh. referred to the distribution of power, was impossible.

Then I sent for the little Carnarvon, who was out of town, and so I telegraphed for him, and he will probably attend me to-morrow, accompanied by Liddon.

Confidential. HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Dec.* 9.—You must keep the Ld. Chanr. quiet—at least for the nonce. His scheme of occupation is that of a pettifogger—joint stock and limited liability.

It is best not to harass Salisbury with instructions. He has enough. Affairs will develop themselves, and he seems not unequal to the situation. If the 'Eastern Xtians' will be tolerably tranquil—sensible on such matters they never can be—I by no means despair of ultimate success.

I shall be in town on Monday at 3 o'ck., being tempted to prolong my stay here by these golden morns of expiring autumn.

Since he had returned from Castle Bromwich in August, Beaconsfield had pursued his anxious labours at Hughenden and in London, without interruption or change. But he spent a week-end at Sandringham immediately after the Guildhall banquet, and then went for a day or two to Ingestre, where Lady Bradford was a guest. Early in December, also, he got away from London for the inside of a week to Crichel, where the Granvilles were included in a large party to meet him.

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To Lady Bradford.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *Nov.* 20.—. . . Salisbury went off this morning, about eleven. Monty accompanied him to the station. He had several secretaries and, I think unhappily, several members of his family; Lady Salisbury, and his eldest son, and his daughter! I fear these latter will not be as serviceable as his secretaries. The French papers say the Conference is delayed because M. de Salisbury is accompanied by Mme. de Salisbury, and seven children! It was not quite so bad as that, but bad eno'.

Pss. Mary wrote to me and begged me to call on her, wh. I did yesterday. . . . Pss. Mary was amusing; she had been living in a Russian circle and retailed all their gossip, wh. showed they were counting on many things wh. will not happen. . . .

10, DOWNING ST., *Nov.* 29.—. . . I am very busy trying to make a Bishop of Truro. Nothing gives me more trouble than the Episcopacy. There are so many parties, so many 'schools of thought' in the Church.

Cornwall is full of Dissenters, like a rabbit warren. And any high jinks there wd. never do. And yet the dissenting pastors, particularly the Wesleyans, the most numerous, are no longer popular with their flocks. So there is an opportunity for an adequate man. . . .

'I think I have got a good man' for the Bishopric of Truro, wrote Disraeli to Lady Chesterfield on December 3. He was quite right. Benson's gifts both of organising capacity and of spiritual leadership proved so fruitful in his newly created diocese that when, six years later, the metropolitan see of Canterbury fell vacant, he was promoted to it on the recommendation of Disraeli's rival and successor, Gladstone. Hardy had strongly urged Benson's appointment to Truro: 'You have made a bishop,' wrote Disraeli to him on the day on which the offer was sent.

To Anne Lady Chesterfield.

CRICHEL, WIMBORNE, *Dec.* 8.—. . . The party here is very large, and ought to be very brilliant, if persons were as agreeable as their rank and fashion, their dresses and their looks. But then they are not. The fine ladies here are all below par, and as S. was not here the first two days, I had

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every opportunity of tasting them. The vintage was very insipid; and had it not been for your ever agreeable friend Lady A.,[1] I shd. have been much bored. Things are better now, as I get a walk with S., and a rubber in the evening with herself and Lady A., and Lord Granville. . . .

To Lady Bradford.

10, DOWNING ST., *Dec.* 8,[2] 1876.—Great despatches arrived last night from Constantinople, and the Cabinet has been sitting on them this long morning. I think there is a chance of my getting down to you on Saturday.

I sate next to Prince Hal[3] at dinner yesterday—at Ferdinand de R[othschild]'s. . . .

After dinner there was whist, and Rosebery came up to me, and talked very well—just come from America—his 3rd visit, and full as an egg of fun and quaint observation.

The dinner was really exquisite and served with incomparable taste. I was so much amused with the menu, that I stole it for the first time in my life; but I stole it for you.

The preliminary Conferences are closed, and I hope we have given the formal Conference, wh. commences on Thursday, eno' work to give us a tolerably tranquil Xmas week.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *Dec.* 13.—All the world is talking now of a private meeting yesterday at Stafford House, the Duke[4] in the chair, to commence a subscription for the Turkish soldiers, who are fighting for their country, and bravely—without pay, or food, or clothes. . . . The Lord Blantyre gave 1,000 guineas. There shd. be a report of all this.

Beaconsfield was properly anxious, throughout this critical autumn and winter, not to let diplomacy outrun military preparation. On September 30 he wrote to Hardy, the War Secretary, in view of what appeared then to be the probability of an immediate invasion of Turkey by Russia, and perhaps by Austria also, to make enquiries as to the practicability of sending a British

[1] Maria Marchioness of Ailesbury.

[2] There must be some mistake about the date, as Beaconsfield was at Crichel on Dec. 8.

[3] In Beaconsfield's private letters of this period, the Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward VII., is often called 'Prince Hal,' in obvious reference to Prince Henry in Shakespeare's *Henry IV.*—a Prince who eventually became, as Beaconsfield believed that Prince Albert Edward would become, an excellent and popular king.

[4] Of Sutherland.

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force, with the Porte's consent, to hold and defend Constantinople. Hardy at once set to work with his professional advisers; but Beaconsfield found it difficult to induce Derby to contemplate the possibility of military action.

To Lord Derby.

Confidential. 10, Downing Street, Whitehall, *Oct.* 21.—It appeared to me yesterday, from yr. remarks in Cabinet, that you hardly cared to consider the military elements of the question that absorbs our thought.

We don't live in the times of Marshal Diebitsch,[1] when his troops were exhausted, half famished, and diseased, by the time they had reached only the frontier. We live in the times of Odessa and Rumanian railways.

General Fadéef has laid a plan before the Russian Government, 'in order to settle the fate of European Turkey in spite of the maritime Powers.'

It is at the War Office, in their confidential archives, with a study by experts, assisted by all the secret intelligence from Wellesley as to position of troops, wh. appears always to have been accurate.

From this, and other documents, all of wh. shd. be known to you, I conclude the invasion of Turkey, and conquest of Constantinople, may be rapid.

If so, our determination as to our ultimate course cannot be too soon decided on. Constantinople occupied by the Russians, while the British fleet was in Besika Bay, would be the most humiliating event, that has occurred to England, since the surrenders of Whitelocke and Burgoyne and Cornwallis, but infinitely in its consequences more important and disastrous.

Oct. 22.—I am anxious about the state of affairs.

There seems to me no doubt that, after the passage of the Pruth, Russia may reach Constantinople in sixty days—at the most 64.

The Danube, from some of the strong places being now in Rumania and other causes, is no longer a barrier, and the crossing of the Balkans may be calculated almost to a nicety.

Any possibility of defence under these circumstances depends upon Turkey possessing the command of the sea, as in that case the Russians would be deprived of their heavy artillery, their siege trains, which cannot pass the Balkans; but if a Russian squadron reaches the Black Sea and captures Varna her siege trains would then be at her disposal.

[1] Who gained his fame in the Russo-Turkish War of 1828-9.

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Any movement on our part, whether we fortify the Peninsula by Lake Durkos or the Chersonese, would be sixteen days too late if delayed till the Russians cross the Balkans.

But what alarms me is that Turkey, feeling she is utterly deserted, may make some mad compact with Russia, opening the Straits, and giving her complete control over the Asiatic shore.

As for compensation to England by having Egypt and Crete, this is moonshine. If Constantinople is Russian, they would only be an expensive encumbrance.

I have asked Hardy to come up to-morrow, that we may have the military details clear, and then after a consultation of all three together, I think we ought to have a Cabinet. . . .

Hardy's diary gives the result of his long talk with Beaconsfield on October 23. 'We discussed eventualities and came to some conclusions; to send officers to survey the ground behind Constantinople, and to look forward to guarding it in case of need.' Beaconsfield also concerted naval preparations with Ward Hunt, the First Lord of the Admiralty, but found Derby resolutely opposed to giving hypothetical instructions to the Fleet to pass the Dardanelles in the event of Russian aggression on the Straits.

Lord Derby to G. Ward Hunt.

Private. FOREIGN OFFICE, *Oct.* 24, '76.—The step of ordering a British fleet to pass the Dardanelles (the consent of the Porte not having been asked) is not one to be taken offhand, nor without the fullest consideration. I cannot sanction the order which has been suggested to you as matters now stand. If a Russian vessel went through—which I do not consider as probable—there would be plenty of time to send the order by telegraph. But I repeat that I do not expect the contingency to occur, since the passage would be resisted, and, as we know, the Russians have no fleet to match that of Turkey.

The open preparations for war made by Russia in November caused Beaconsfield to press forward our own military plans for the preservation of Constantinople and the two Straits from sudden seizure, the one great military object which he always kept before his eyes. The Beaconsfield papers contain an interesting manu-

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script, partly in his own handwriting, and partly in Corry's, headed 'November, 1876. Notes for Cabinet—Russo-Turkish Question.' It is not clear for which of the November Cabinets this was prepared, perhaps for one of which Richmond wrote to Cairns on November 19: 'A most interesting Cabinet. I do not think I ever saw the For[eign] Sec. so "stiff." . . . I suspect it will be necessary to keep him up to the mark. I was surprised to find the P[rime] M[inister] so much with him.'

If order given for mobilising Eng. army it may be practically ready for embarkation in 21 days and at Const. in 42.

If given at passage of the Pruth, Eng. army will be in position 22 days before arrival of Russian.

If given at passage of Danube *one* day before.

If at passage of Balkans 16 days too late.

Can the period for mobilising be diminished? Yes—by taking certain steps.

By moving war material to the points where the troops will assemble prior to embarkation and gradually moving the troops to those places—but a strong hand required for this.

Malta may be strengthened with Artillery and Engineers and the armament for the lines shipped ready to be pushed on.

The neck of land at Boulair is 4½ miles across. Works to render the Chersonese practically impregnable would be accomplished in 14 days by 6,000 men. These men need not be English. A force of 20,000 men would be required to hold the works. Without the works a fleet, however powerful, could not arrest, scarcely delay, the march of an army along the Chersonese by Boulair. This might be said even were the country level. There are in fact hills wh. would practically shelter an army from attack from the sea.

Bosphorus—the distance between Lake Durkos, Byyk, Tcheckmeje is 11 miles. Works to render this line practically impregnable could be accomplished in 21 days by 6,000 men. These men need not be English. A force of 40,000 men would be required to hold the works.

It is obvious that, to attain her object, England would have to seize both the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, and to hold the land approaches to each.

To accomplish both operations would not demand, necessarily, so large a force as the numbers combined (20,000 +40,000)—which have been stated as required respectively for either operation by itself; and this, because a flank of each of the suggested positions would rest on the shore of

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the Sea of Marmora, each from the other only about *100* miles. It may be said that England could at once despatch an Army sufficient to occupy and hold both positions.

Given the means of transport, and given that there shall be no hastily conceived reforms, nor disturbance of the mobilisation scheme, England can place on board ship, in 21 days, a force of *46,000*, and *practically* ready for the field, of which, about *34,000* men would be men now serving in the Army, about *5,000* men of the Army reserve, and the rest men of the Militia reserve.

About this time Beaconsfield obtained the consent of his colleagues to a policy of detaining for the time in this country as a precaution eight guns, of hitherto unprecedented size and power, which were being built by a famous firm in England to the order of a foreign Government. He further elucidated his views in a conversation with Hardy at the end of the month. On the assumption of the failure of the Conference and a Russian occupation of Bulgaria, he suggested, as recorded by Hardy in a memorandum at the time, the following policy:

He would, on the application of the Porte, send up the fleet, but would not assent to send it at the instance of the Powers or Russia, as some quarrel would be got up, and it used to destroy the Turkish fleet and play into Russian hands. Then he would occupy the lines behind Constantinople and at Gallipoli, but whether at the crossing of the Pruth or later—he inclines to the former. He says that, although partition has not been intended, it will come, and in that case offers will be made to us. Constantinople not likely to be offered, nor would it be desirable to accept. He would like to buy a port in the Black Sea from the Porte, as Batoum, . . . or Sinope. . . . He said Egypt would be offered as before, but he did not see what we should gain. . . . What he wants is a Malta or Gibraltar, which would prevent the Black Sea being a constant threat to our maritime power in the Mediterranean. He is clearly full of anxiety for the future.[1] . . .

Beaconsfield developed his ideas still further in a couple of letters to Salisbury, who very wisely took Paris,

[1] Gathorne Hardy, Vol. I., p. 377.

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Berlin, Vienna, and Rome on his way to Constantinople, and held long conversations in each capital with Sovereigns and statesmen.

To Lord Salisbury.

10, DOWNING ST., *Nov.* 29, 1876.—. . . The visits to the Continental Courts have not been fruitless: it was a serviceable reconnaissance, and when you have seen men, you can judge better of their conduct. So far as the Conference is concerned, the result seems to be this: it will consist of a meeting between you and Ignatieff. It is possible that meeting may have results. It is possible that Russia may wish to avoid, honorably, a struggle, wh. the state of her finances, the unpreparedness of her armies, and her want of naval power, may make her desirous to postpone.

It was always one of her principles never to engage the Porte except she had a command of the sea. Now, that condition is just reversed. Nevertheless, 1st, the bankruptcy of the Porte; 2ndly, the assumed alienation of England from the Turks, partly produced by the Bulgarian outrages, and partly by the non-payment of Turkish dividends, have prevailed on her, apparently, to take a step at wh. she first hesitated.

Any peace, the conditions of wh. do not involve foreign occupation, would be a triumph for England.

It is wise, however, to assume, that there will be an invasion of Turkey by Russia. I do not think that would necessitate any declaration of war against Russia on our part. Protesting against the passage of the Pruth, as a violation of the revised Treaty of Paris (1871), I think the Porte should then be advised to solicit the presence of our fleet at the capital and, of course, if expedient, in the Black Sea. At the same time, at the expense of the English Government, the works on the Peninsula of Constantinople should be completed.

If the Danube, as I will apprehend, is passed without effective opposition, the Russians leaving a sufficient force behind them to mask the fortresses (this, however, would require 100,000 men), the next step of England would depend on their progress in Bulgaria, and in the prospects of resistance on the Balkans.

Upon such circumstances should depend whether, and when, we may decide to send a *corps d'armée* to the Peninsula of Constantinople. We could send our troops there in three weeks, and all will have been prepared for their reception.

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Generally speaking, the situation is very similar to the state, wh. preceded the partition of Poland; Austria protesting against a deed, and really disapproving of it, which she afterwards joined with others to consummate. It is highly probable that Austria will assemble a powerful force in Transylvania, and I believe that, in so doing, her object is to coerce Russia, but it will end by Russia having her own way, and Austria seeking consolation not only in the possession of Bosnia, wh. she will have previously occupied, but in Herzegovina, and, not unlikely, Servia.

It is a most critical moment in European politics. If Russia is not checked, the Holy Alliance will be revived in aggravated form and force. Germany will have Holland; and France, Belgium, and England will be in a position I trust I shall never live to witness.

If we act in the manner I have generally indicated we shall, probably, in the conclusion, obtain some commanding stronghold in Turkey from wh. we need never recede. It will be for the interest of the Porte itself that we should; and if they would sell to us, for instance, Varna, the supremacy of Russia might for ever be arrested.

I am surprised that Bismarck should go on harping about Egypt. Its occupation by us would embitter France, and I don't see it would at all benefit us, if Russia possessed Constantinople. I would sooner we had Asia Minor than Egypt.

In regard to home politics as influenced by the foreign situation, there are two points worth noticing.

1st. An organised attempt to revive agitation under the title of a Conference in London on Turkish affairs, wh. is to sit while the real Conference is holding its session. Several leading members of the Liberal party have declined to be members of this intolerable assembly, but Lord Shaftesbury, who believes he is preparing a great career for Evelyn Ashley, is of course a leading member, and the Gladstone influence has prevailed on the Duke of Westminster to be President. The Queen told me, that G. could command the Duke of Westminster and the Duke and Dss. of Argyll.

The second point is our Parliamentary position, wh. is very favourable. It is not merely that our own men are unanimously staunch, but the whole of the Irish party has been instructed to support the Government, and there is a decided anti-Russian section in the English Liberals. It is said not less than sixty. . . .

Dec. 1.—I wrote to you yesterday by F. O. messenger. You will receive this by a private hand, almost as soon. It refers to the most serious matter: the question of occupation,

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on wh. some information has reached me, wh. throws a new and strange light on that crux.

If the question of occupation be immediately introduced into the Conference, the position, that you might well take, would be this: England will not say, that she is unequivocally opposed to the occupation of Turkey for a temporary purpose, but she cannot agree to such a step except at the instance, and with the full consent, of the Porte—as in the Syrian case, now so quoted.

This attitude would prevent Conference breaking up, and would allow the critical examination of the measures of Reform independently of the question of Guarantee.

When ultimately submitted to the Porte, this position might be assumed by the Sultan: the Porte will consent to the occupation provided it is not effected by conterminous Powers, which will lead to war; and she may suggest, that England should occupy. Having taken this position, she must be inexorable.

I am prepared to propose such a measure to the Cabinet, and cannot doubt, especially with your aid and approval, that they would adopt it, and that it would be cheerfully accepted by Parliament, and be popular outside: as alike preventing war, effecting our object, and maintaining the authority of this country.

We have a force of 40,000 men ready, and I cannot doubt that, if 6,000 French were sufficient for Syria, 40,000 English would be ample for European Turkey: say 10[000], or 15,000 for Bosnia, etc., and 25[000] or 30,000 for Bulg[ari]a. Besides, we should have the aid, if necessary, of the Turkish regular army, which would be under our supreme command.

Of course, it must be the last card to be played, and it must be so done, that we must seem almost unwillingly to consent.

Turkey would consent when she found, as the negotiations proceed, that occupation was inevitable, and, that too, by Russia.

Russia would faintly oppose, perhaps at once agree, assuming that England has neither the ability, nor the inclination, for such a step.

I think it would suit Austria, who shrinks from the expense of occupying Bosnia, and only would do it out of jealousy of Russia.

If this view of affairs be correct, it seemed to me, that no delay should occur in your having it in your mind, as it would be a polestar to guide you, and a great end always to be working up to. So I have sent you this by a private and trusty hand. And have not, and shall not, breathe a word

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of its contents to a single human being. Let it come to us, if you approve it, in due course as your proposal, which I will immediately support in the Cabinet.

A joint occupation with Russia I look upon as highly objectionable, and I don't believe the Porte would take that. They would prefer fighting.

I need not repeat, what I have said more than once in Cabinet, that the Russian scheme of occupation; Bulgaria to Russia, Bosnia to Austria, and our fleet to Constantinople, would be most perilous, if not fatal. It would insure another Navarino, and probably was so intended. We must never attempt to occupy Constantinople, but at the instance of the Porte. . . .

To Montagu Corry.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *Dec.* 13, 1876.—. . . The 'Intelligence Dept.' must change its name. It is the department of Ignorance. Instead of 40,000 men for the entrenched camp to defend Constantinople, they now require 65,000, and that does not include 10,000 more for Gallipoli.

It is the same with guns and everything. 50 per cent. more men and guns of a heavier calibre—a railway for stores, and telegraph lines from Malta to Crete, etc.: in short, a very big business, in which the present state of affairs hardly justifies us in embarking.

The Conference is in full swing. You could hardly get out of the park gates at Crichel, when telegrams came pouring in: two huge ones when we were at tea, in Gussie's[1] little room, which made Granville's mouth water. Since I arrived, they have rained—3 yesterday from Salisbury. . . .

The London Conference to which Beaconsfield referred in his letter to Salisbury was the answer of the pro-Russian or anti-Turkish agitators to the Guildhall speech. It was held in St. James's Hall on December 8, under the presidency of the Duke of Westminster in the afternoon, and of Lord Shaftesbury in the evening, and was attended by Gladstone himself and some prominent Radical politicians, as well as by many men of distinction in different walks of life. While some speakers used moderate language and only deprecated any policy which might commit the country to fighting on behalf of Turkey, the keynote of the Conference was struck

[1] Lady Alington.

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at the outset by a demand from the Duke in the chair that the fleets and armies of England should be sent to Constantinople to coerce the Turk. Liddon, the great preacher, expressed a fervent hope for armed intervention in Turkey on behalf of the subject races, preferably by an English army of 50,000, 80,000, or 100,000 men; and Freeman, the historian, exclaimed, 'Perish the interests of England, perish our dominion in India, sooner than we should strike one blow or speak one word on behalf of the wrong against the right.' The extravagance of these sentiments and proposals, which received no countenance from the Liberal leaders, Granville and Hartington, or from their immediate followers, assisted that revulsion of public feeling in favour of the Government which had been visible for some weeks. Scotland and the north of England were still under the spell of Gladstone's agitation, but London and the south largely shared the indignation with which the Queen regarded the proceedings at St. James's Hall.

To Lady Bradford.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *Dec.* 16, 1876, 6 *o'ck.*—I have just returned from Windsor, wh. has taken up the whole day. I found the Faery most indignant about the St. James's Hall 'Conference.' . . . She thinks the Attorney-General ought to be set at these men; it can't be constitutional. . . . I said a good word for Granville and Harty-Tarty—to whom, I was sure, she might look, if necessary, with confidence. She is sure the country is right, and that when Parliament meets, we shall be triumphant. 'It has gone on for 6 months—this noise; and suppose a mistake had been made, what then? But I will never admit that any mistake has been made from first to last.' Bravo! . . .

The hopes of the country and of Europe, were fixed on the Constantinople Conference, which was formally to open just before Christmas. Salisbury, who, while on his way, had explored the ground so far as the other Powers were concerned, had long and amicable conversations, when he reached Constantinople, with the

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representative of Russia, Ignatieff. The general outcome appeared to be that, while Russia maintained her view that military occupation was the only really effective guarantee, the Powers as a whole endorsed Salisbury's programme, which deprecated military occupation and the creation of tributary States, favoured the *status quo* in Serbia and Montenegro, and proposed a large measure of administrative autonomy for Bosnia and Bulgaria, together with guarantees for the due carrying out of the reforms by the Porte. But it was already apparent to the far-sighted that the principal obstacle to the success of the Conference would be the obstinacy of Turkey. In that case what would the Government do?

To Lady Bradford.

10, DOWNING ST., *Dec.* 20, 7 *o'ck.*—I have just returned from Windsor, and after a long conference with Ld. Derby, and an order for a Cabinet next Friday, I steal a moment for you.

Salisbury has succeeded in all the great points of his mission as regards Russia. There is to be no Russian occupation of Bulgaria; Bulgaria is to be divided into two provinces,[1] wh. will, or rather would, strengthen the Porte; the Circassians are not to be banished; the population generally are not to be disarmed, wh. wd. create a civil war—and other things; but we understand, and believe, that the Porte will accept nothing and wishes to fight.

There was a change of Government yesterday at Constantinople, but I doubt whether that will help us. . . .

To Lord Derby.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *Dec.* 21, '76.—Remember you kindly offered to dine with me to-morrow. I think we had better be alone: it is years since we have had such a *tête-à-tête* —and there is plenty to talk about.

But there is one thing we ought to talk about before our meeting and before the Cabinet.

We—that is you and I—ought to have clear and distinct views about our course as to the suspension of diplomatic intercourse with the Porte under certain circumstances. I shd. like to talk this over with you to-day. I am engaged

[1] An anticipation of the arrangement secured by the Congress of Berlin.

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the earlier part of this morn.—but at yr. service anywhere after 3 o'ck.

Schou. said to me last night, that Russia did not care a pin for Bulgaria, or Bosnia, or any other land—what it really wanted was 'the Straits'—the only thing they wanted. I said, I knew that.

Friday, [*Dec.* 22].—. . . The tel. of this morning from S[alisbury] shows, that it will be wise to come to a very clear decision to-day.

We shd. resolve, that H.M. Gt. can participate in no coercive measures agst. the Porte, nor sanction them.

That if the proposals of the Conference are declined, Ld. Saly. is to leave Const., Sir Henry Elliot to avail himself of his leave of absence, but that diplomatic relations not to be suspended.

The Beaconsfield papers contain notes for this Cabinet of Friday, December 22, written partly in his own hand, partly in Corry's, as follows:

Policy to be recommended in event of Turkey proving obstinate at Conference.

Principle—not to coerce the Porte or to sanction coercion by others, but to use every means of friendly influence and persuasion.

Russian system—always to induce England to join in coercion of the Porte.

Mr. Canning's experience and its consequences.

Different effect on England from that on other Powers of suspension of diplomatic relations with the Porte.

The Cabinet decided in the sense desired by Beaconsfield, but the moral persuasion which was all that their regard for the integrity and independence of Turkey permitted them to employ did not prove sufficient. Midhat Pasha, the Turkish statesman principally associated with the demand for a Constitution, was appointed Grand Vizier immediately before the Conference met; and on the very day of its assemblage, a Constitution was solemnly promulgated by the Sultan containing on paper all the rights and liberties that reasonable men could desire. It was a clear intimation that the Porte intended to maintain that the Conference and its proposed reforms were superfluous, as the Sultan had already granted by

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the Constitution all that was necessary. In vain did the representatives of the Powers whittle down their demands, which had at first been somewhat stringent and involved the creation of either a Belgian or an international *gendarmerie* to superintend the execution of the reforms. Even the minimum finally presented for acceptance in the middle of January was definitely rejected on the 18th of the month by a Grand Advisory Council which the Sultan had summoned for its consideration.

We get from Beaconsfield's letters an insight into his feelings and policy during this disapppointing time. The Queen's request and the urgency of public business kept him in London for Christmas, which he had hoped to spend as Lady Bradford's guest at Weston, but he went to Windsor on New Year's Day to celebrate the occasion of Her Majesty's proclamation as Empress in India,[1] and immediately afterwards contrived to run down to Weston for the inside of a week.

To Lady Bradford.

10, DOWNING ST., *Dec.* 22.—I sent you a horrid tel. this morning, and am too much upset to write anything now that cd. amuse or interest you. Last night the Queen wrote to me that she thought it an act of great imprudence that myself and Ld. Derby shd. be absent from London at such a critical time, and that she must express her anxious and extreme desire that we should not depart.

Ld. D. never intended to leave town: his wife has gone to Knowsley to do what is necessary at this season of the year.

I can't doubt the Queen was right: indeed my conscience had pricked me more than once, and probably I shd. not have stayed with you over Xmas Day. Still I had counted on this visit—more than I care to express. It wd. have been the only happy week during this laborious and anxious year—except dear C[astle] Bromwich.

It was, of course, impossible not to remain; and we have had a Cabinet to-day, and probably things will turn up every hour. Affairs are most critical. . . .

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *Xmas Day.*—. . . We had some other offerings yesterday. . . . In the evening came a

[1] See Vol. V., pp. 485-487.

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Xmas card from the Faery, and signed V.R. & I. (*Regina et Imperatrix*), the first time I have received that signature. And an enormous packet. Unfolded, it took the shape of a large folio volume—*Faust*, illustrated with a weird and romantic pencil, by a German artist. . . . The binding of this volume exceeds in work and splendor all the treasures wh. Dr. Schliemann has disinterred at Mycenæ. . . .

This is Xmas Day and I dine quite alone. . . .

I can give you no absolute information as to affairs; 99 out of a 100 will tell you that war is certain between R[ussia] and T[urkey]. But when everybody wishes for peace, and, most of all, Russia, I can't help hoping that some golden bridge may be constructed, even if it be gilded, to extricate R. from its false position. To-day, when we were to have heard so much, nothing has yet arrived, which makes me wildly think that, at the last, something has been devised. . . .

To Lord Derby.

Confidl. 2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *Dec.* 28.—Sal.'s tel. received last night, and wh. I have just read shows, I fear, that he is much duped by Ig.

Remember, for example, his information that war wd. take place on Russian Xmas Day, and that the Proclamation was signed, and, I think, he had even seen it.

Now we are equally confidentially informed, that the Russians don't wish war till April. This he is permitted to know after he has unnecessarily bullied the Turks.

Really this thing ought to be put an end to. Lyons cd. have done it. Odo Russell ought to do it at Berlin. . . .

It is a case for *mezzo termine*. The Russians shrink from war: the Porte cannot accept the preposterous proposals. Could not Pomposo[1] with Gort[chakoff] communicate a mitigated scheme? wh. might be proposed by Austria, or even ourselves, after previous arrangements with Porte?

Confdl. Dec. 30.—I am greatly distressed by Sal.'s tel. of this morning. It is clear, that Elliot had never communicated to him Elliot's interview with Midhat, or Sal. wd. never have made the observation, that he did not believe the Turkish Plenipos. had ever read the papers.

Sal. seems most prejudiced, and not to be aware, that his principal object, in being sent to Const., is to keep the Russians out of Turkey, not to create an ideal existence for Turkish Xtians.

He is more Russian than Ignatieff: *plus Arabe que l'Arabie!*

[1] Lord Augustus Loftus.

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While Russia, I believe, is meditating and preparing compromise, and the Porte not disinclined to that, Sal. sees only obduracy and war.

Is he informed of the reports of Loftus, of Lyons, of all, even the Russian courtier Odo, showing the necessity and wish for peace?

We ought to be asked whe[the]r he was aware of the Midhat interview? You *must* take him in hand, confidentially and cordially.

To Anne Lady Chesterfield.

10, DOWNING STREET, 7 *o'ck.* [? *Jan.* 2, 1877].—I have just come back from Windsor. The Queen is imprisoned—like the Pope: all the country about is under water, and she cannot go to Osborne because there is scarlet fever, or measles, or some other ill that flesh is heir to, in her curtilage. . . .

Ld. Salisbury has succeeded in everything as regards the Russians, and much distinguished himself; but now it is said, and feared, and believed, that the Turks will fight. I wish they were all—Russians and Turks—at the bottom of the Black Sea.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *Jan.* 7, 1877.—I arrived here yesterday afternoon. . . . You left us [at Weston] on Wednesday morning, and from that moment the pressure began: two messengers every day. However, I was resolved to remain, tho' Royalty herself was 'quite surprised' that I had left town! I knew the cut of the Conference better than Her Majesty, and that affairs are never precipitated at Stamboul, tho' Emperors may threaten, and Plenipotentiaries be positive. They are to meet again to-morrow, when everything is to be 'settled,' one way or the other; nevertheless, I shall not be astonished that the Conference will again adjourn. The fact is, Russia would give a good deal to get out of the scrape into wh. her blustering has entrapped her; and the Porte knows this, and seems resolved to make the Emperor and his princely Minister eat the leek: very difficult to digest, if not impossible. So you may be prepared for anything, except the humiliation of the Turks.

To Lady Bradford.

10, DOWNING STREET, *Jan.* 8, 1877.—. . . I think, myself, the Conference is on its last legs.[1] Salisbury succeeded in moderating the Russians, and I have done my best to moderate the Turks; but we have found out that Bismarck is resolved

[1] Hardy wrote in his diary under the same date that the Conference was rendered futile by 'Russian falsehood, Turkish evasion, German treachery.'

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that Russia shall go to war, or that Gortchakoff, whom he hates and a little despises, and yet [is] very jealous of, shall endure ineffable mortifications by retreating, without the honors of war, after all his blustering.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *Jan.* 10.—. . . I took a little walk this morning, but it was an easterly wind. I met Malmesbury, walking very well, and looking very well, tho' he says he has the Roman fever wh. has knocked him up again. . . . M. was skilfully rouged. People say, that resource is effeminate. M. is manly enough, and the two most manly persons I ever knew, Palmerston and Lyndhurst, both rouged. So one must not trust too much to general observations.

Jan. 20, 1877.—. . . I am a prisoner.[1] . . . It is harassing —much more than any Eastern Question, wh. by no means appals me, I assure you. We shall have a time no doubt of some trouble and suspense, and much that will require both pluck and prudence. . . . I think it probable that the Russians will keep their army on the Turkish frontier for some time, to veil their discomfiture and really ignominious position; and then, after a while, the Emperor of Germany, or some such being, will address a Xtian appeal to the Tsar, who will be becomingly magnanimous, and sacrifice everything to the peace of the world. I only hope the Turks won't get too bumptious, and do something silly. . . .

To Lord Derby.

2, WHITEHALL G'DNS, *Jan.* 15, '77.—It is most unfortunate that you are away.

Last night there came to me a tel. from Salisbury of the most pressing nature. He says 'all Ambass. have agreed to announce, that, if our reduced terms are not accepted on Thursday, we shall declare the Conference broken up, and leave Const. But Sir H. E. refuses to promise to leave at the same time we do.

'This will make our success much more unlikely. It will be treated as justifying the rumors that he represents a different pol. from the Conf. and that Brit. Govt. will not support me.'

'Earnestly urges' that Elliot should be instructed to leave at the same time. 'No time to be lost,' etc., etc., etc. 'Perhaps the best form will be a joint instruction to me and E. to leave at the same time, directly after Conf. broken up.'

This is a grave and doubtful matter and requires our counsel. . . .

[1] With an attack of gouty bronchitis.

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The last sitting of the Conference was on January 20. Elliot was recalled on leave, and Salisbury came quietly home. Disraeli held that Salisbury had perhaps been unduly influenced by Ignatieff; but he did not underestimate either the considerable success which Salisbury had achieved in keeping the European Concert in harmony during a trying period, or the remarkable impression which his massive personality, hitherto unknown to the Continent, had produced. He was very anxious that his colleague should not take too much to heart the failure of the Conference to persuade the Porte to be reasonable.

To Lord Salisbury.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *Feb.* 6, 1877.—. . . I hope you will not permit the immediate result of the Conference unduly to depress you.

Trust me, before very long, you will bless the day, wh. permitted you to obtain such a mastery of men and things, and especially as connected with the East, as this momentous enterprise has afforded to you. I feel, stronger than ever, that all that is occurring portends—and that not remotely—partition. Then, you will feel the inestimable advantage of yr. recent labors, and, then, all will appreciate your invaluable services.

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CHAPTER IV.

War and Cabinet Dissension.

1877.

The outcome of the Constantinople Conference was to leave Russia and Turkey face to face, with no apparent prospect of immediate support, from any other Power, for the extreme position which each occupied. Turkey, while vaunting her new Constitution and professing her readiness to reform her administration, had definitely refused the minimum of autonomy for her Christian provinces which united Europe had pressed upon her. Russia had insisted that nothing but military occupation of Turkey by a European Power, or Powers, would be efficacious for Christian protection. But Europe as a whole, under England's leadership, had refused to associate itself with this policy of force. Would Russia, now that Turkey had chosen to isolate herself, await the issue of Turkish professions, or proceed to enforce her will in arms, as Alexander had threatened in November?

Beaconsfield thought, as did apparently the Turks, that Russia would hesitate and draw back. He did not know that Alexander had taken precautions in advance to secure the benevolent neutrality of the Power best situated geographically for intervention in a Russo-Turkish War. On July 8 of the previous year, at Reichstadt in Bohemia, the Emperors and Foreign Ministers of Austria and Russia had come to a private understanding; and on January 15 of 1877, while the Conference was still in being at Constantinople, a definite treaty was signed at Vienna between the two Powers, delimiting

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their spheres of interest in the Balkans, and specifying the terms on which Austria would consent to remain neutral if Russia invaded Turkey. The treaty was concealed from Europe as the understanding had been concealed, and even now its actual provisions are in dispute. But there is no doubt that it was based on that policy of partition which Beaconsfield anticipated, and that Austria claimed, and was conceded, the right, in certain eventualities, to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina. By this treaty Russia had secured herself against a flank attack, and it is difficult to regard her various diplomatic manœuvres between January, when the treaty was signed, and April, when she declared war, as anything but playing for position and for time, until the snows should melt in the Balkans and the season for campaigning should open.

Her principal political opponent in Europe, the British Prime Minister, was once more attacked this January by gout.

To Lady Bradford.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *Jan.* 30.—. . . I hope I have turned the corner, but have had a severe attack. . . . I forgot to tell you that your friend the P. of Wales came and sate with me a good hour last Sunday, hearing I was in quarantine. He did not want anything: only chitter-chatter: so you see I am almost as much in favor, as your agreeable *bête noire*, Granville. . . .

Beaconsfield was naturally anxious to present his case to Parliament in the most convincing manner, and was dissatisfied with his Foreign Secretary's draft of the paragraphs of the Queen's Speech dealing with the Eastern Question. He himself drafted an alternative, which he asked Derby to treat as 'brute matter.'

To Lord Derby.

2, WHITEHALL G'DNS, *Jan.* 29.—My paragraphs were only drawn to show you what was passing in my mind; raw material for you to work upon. The time is, however, now so pressing, that, chastened by your criticism, I will insert

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them in the drt. speech, and then all may have a shot at them.

I think we cannot deny that our policy preceding the Conference, and our efforts in it, were to maintain the integ. and indep. of the Ott. Emp. The declaration refers only to the past, and it appears to me, I confess, of vital importance, for reasons which it would weary you to listen to in writing.

Great fallacies exist on this famous phrase of integ. and indep.

When we speak of maintaining the integ. of a Kingdom, we mean the integrity as then existing. England, and Austria, and France, will assert their integrity, and expect it to be acknowledged, tho' they have all of them lost more provinces than Turkey.

Then again as to independence, we mean by maintaining the independence of a State that we acknowledge and contemplate the continuity of its sovereign power, even while we may be suggesting limitations of that power for a temporary purpose.

Prussia was subject at the beginning of this century to far more humiliating conditions, than those proposed for Turkey: its fortresses were occupied, and its power of enlistment limited—to as low an amount as 40,000 men—and so on.

These are rough mems. I would send them to nobody but yourself: but they are, I hope, suggestive.

The special Envoy's[1] letter alarms me. I am a little less alarmed, that he twice applied, 1st, for increased assistance to Colonel Home in his fortifications of Constantinople, and 2nd, for his survey of the Turkish ports—Batoum, Rhodes, Cyprus.

The Cabinet accepted Beaconsfield's draft, after some inaccuracies had been corrected by Derby. To Salisbury, who did not return from Constantinople in time to take part in the discussion, he wrote, 'I am, and I alone, responsible for the notice of Eastern affairs. . . . The remarks pledge us to nothing, for we are now indeed as free as air; but they state the past—*i.e.*, since the prorogation—in a manner which, I trust, will show the country that our course, instead of being vacillating and capricious, has been clear and consistent.' The Speech explained how the Government had anxiously

[1] Salisbury.

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waited for an opportunity to interpose their good offices in the war between Turkey and Serbia; how, in the course of the negotiations, they had laid down, and obtained the acceptance of the Powers for, the bases upon which not only might peace be brought about, 'but the permanent pacification of the disturbed provinces, including Bulgaria, might be effected'; how they had denounced to the Porte 'the excesses ascertained to have been committed in Bulgaria'; how an armistice had been arranged, and a Conference assembled 'for the consideration of extended terms in accordance with the original bases.' The Speech proceeded:

In taking these steps, my object has throughout been to maintain the peace of Europe, and to bring about the better government of the disturbed provinces, without infringing upon the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire.

The proposals recommended by myself and my allies have not, I regret to say, been accepted by the Porte; but the result of the Conference has been to show the existence of a general agreement among the European Powers, which cannot fail to have a material effect upon the condition and government of Turkey.

In the meantime, the armistice between Turkey and the Principalities has been prolonged, and is still unexpired, and may, I trust, yet lead to the conclusion of an honourable peace.

The debates on the Address in both Houses mainly turned on an attempt by the Opposition to convict the Government of a change of front on the Eastern Question. There, as we have seen, Granville and Hartington had a case, not so far as the end was concerned, but as to the means employed to reach it. As to the immediate policy there was little or no condemnation, but, rather, tacit acquiescence. But, in the Lords, the Duke of Argyll, one of the few Opposition leaders in full sympathy with Gladstone's crusade, denounced Ministers with rhetoric and passion. 'I say distinctly,' he burst out, 'in this high place, on this housetop of Europe, that every insurrection under [the Turkish] Government is

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a legitimate insurrection. Human beings under that Government owe it no allegiance.' Much as Derby might despise sentimentality in politics, the Duke predicted that sentimentality would be too strong for him, for sentiment, on which all moral feeling was founded, ruled the world. The Government, he averred, had been the drag upon Europe. This outburst elicited a brief reply from Beaconsfield, who had only taken his seat in the House that day, and who had meant to leave the defence of the Government in Derby's hands. In a few words he pointed out that the position of the Christian subjects of Turkey was not the only question to be considered, and that, even if it were, the attempted coercion of the Porte would probably only worsen it. The Eastern Question involved some of the elements of the distribution of world power; it involved the existence of empires. He pleaded for calm, sagacious, and statesmanlike consideration of a question affecting the great interests of England.

In spite of the general belief of the public that the Government were steering a safe middle course between extreme policies which would drag England in to fight against her will for either Turkey or Russia, the Duke of Argyll raised another debate ten days later.[1] He was concerned at the prospect of the Turkish question being left entirely to Russia, owing to British weakness and vacillation. The one obstacle, in his view, to firm and effective action by the European Concert had been the resolve of the Government not to sanction the coercion of Turkey. Would not Ministers persevere in the policy which Salisbury advocated at Constantinople? Would not Beaconsfield connect the history of his Government with some determined measure in favour of the Christians in Turkey, which should guarantee them alike from Turkish barbarism and from Russian autocracy?

The debate gave Derby the opportunity of maintaining the peaceful tendency of Ministerial policy, and

[1] Feb. 20.

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Salisbury of justifying his proceedings at the Conference, and especially his refusal to be a party to the coercion of Turkey. It was also productive of a speech by Kimberley in the old Whig spirit, proclaiming his continued adherence to that Palmerstonian Eastern policy against which Gladstone's assaults were directed. That was a policy, Beaconsfield maintained in his speech at the close of the debate, not merely Palmerstonian or even English, but traditional and European. These were the Prime Minister's words:

Let us for a moment take a broad view of what has been the situation and the conduct of the Government. We have been called upon, somewhat unexpectedly, to deal with the largest and the most difficult problem of modern politics. We have been called upon, as many eminent statesmen have been called upon before, to consider this—whether the Ottoman Empire could maintain itself; or whether, after long and sanguinary wars, its vast possessions might be doomed to partition, which probably might affect, without any exaggeration, the fate of Empires. My lords, the policy of Europe on this question has been distinct, and is almost traditional. I say absolutely the policy of Europe, and not merely the policy of England, as it is sometimes described, has been this—that by the maintenance of the territorial integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire great calamities may be averted from Europe, wars may be prevented, and wars of no ordinary duration, and such a disturbance of the distribution of power as might operate most disadvantageously to the general welfare. The phrase, 'the territorial integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire,' has been frequently referred to to-night, and in language of derision. . . . But your lordships will remember it embodies a principle which has always been accepted by statesmen; and the proof of it is seen in this very Conference. . . . The basis on which my noble friend (Lord Derby) achieved the great feat, which has been admired by the noble duke and his friends, of bringing all the Powers to consent to this Conference, was their recognition of the territorial integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire.

Beaconsfield then explained the meaning of this historic phrase on the lines of his letter to Derby of January 29, elaborating the argument with numerous

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illustrations. He pointed out that the traditional policy had been reaffirmed at the Congress of London in 1871, only six years before, when Gladstone, being then in power, saw no reason for a fresh departure.

After reciting and vindicating the various measures taken by the Government in the autumn, Beaconsfield in a weighty passage called attention to the dangers to the traditional policy involved in Russia's plan for the benefit of the Balkan Christians.

Now there were two great policies before us with regard to the Christian subjects of the Porte. There was the Russian plan, and it was one deserving of all respect. It was a plan for establishing a chain of autonomous States, tributary to the Porte, but in every other sense independent. No one can deny that was a large scheme worthy of statesmen and worthy of the deepest consideration. But the result of the deepest consideration which Her Majesty's Government could give to it was that they were forced entirely to disapprove of that scheme. The scheme of a chain of autonomous States in the Balkan country, and indeed in the whole of the country that during the last half-century has been known as European Turkey, is a state of affairs that has existed before. The Turks did not slip down from Asia and conquer Constantinople, as is sometimes mentioned in speeches at national conferences. It was very gradually that they entered and established themselves in Europe. As a rising military Power they obtained territories near the Black Sea, and ultimately entered into Thracia, and there they remained for some time in company with all these independent and autonomous States. There was, of course, an Emperor at Constantinople; there was a King of Bulgaria; there was a King of Servia; there was a hospodar of Wallachia; there was a duke of Athens, and there was a prince of Corinth. And what happened? The new military Power that had entered Europe gradually absorbed and conquered all these independent States; and having conquered these independent and autonomous States, these kingdoms and duchies, the Empire of Constantinople being now limited to its matchless city, and to what in modern diplomatic language is called 'a cabbage garden,' was invested and fell. And it did occur to us that, if there were a chain of autonomous States, and the possessors of Constantinople were again limited to 'a cabbage garden,' probably the same result might occur. . . . Against this plan of the Russian Court we proposed what was

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called administrative autonomy, and we defined that administrative autonomy to be institutions that would secure to the Christian subjects of the Porte some control over their local affairs, and some security against the excesses of arbitrary power.

If the Conference, which, it had been hoped, would secure for the Christians this desirable autonomy, had failed, it was, Beaconsfield declared, from no fault of Salisbury, with whose proceedings at Constantinople he identified himself. Salisbury had succeeded in obtaining the withdrawal of the extreme Russian proposals for an armed occupation of Bulgaria. His only error was that 'he gave too much credit to the Turks for common sense, and he could not believe that, when he made so admirable an arrangement in their favour, they would have lost so happy an opportunity.' Beaconsfield ended on the note which he had been attacked for sounding at Guildhall:

It has been said that the people of this country are deeply interested in the humanitarian and philanthropic considerations involved in [the Eastern Question]. All must appreciate such feelings. But I am mistaken if there be not a yet deeper sentiment on the part of the people of this country, one with which I cannot doubt your lordships will ever sympathise, and that is—the determination to maintain the Empire of England.

For the policy of this speech Beaconsfield had a strong supporter in the Queen, as extracts from her letters to him just before and just after it will show.

From Queen Victoria.

OSBORNE, *Feb.* 14, '77.—The Queen has seen Sir H. Elliot and must say she thinks what he says is very sensible. He is perfectly astounded at Mr. Gladstone, his wildness, folly, and fury! What the Queen is most anxious for, for the interests of this country, is that in any debate which may take place in Parliament it should be clearly stated that we will not be a party to coerce Turkey, and that Russia must not (and we cannot allow her to) go to Constantinople. It is necessary that this should be demonstrated in Parliament, for else Russia may be found advancing and we shall be unable to

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stop her. No one can fathom Russian duplicity and skill in deception. . . .

Feb. 22.—The Queen congratulates Lord Beaconsfield (as much as she does herself) on the very successful debate in the House of Lords on Tuesday and on his admirable speech. She thinks Lord Beaconsfield will be gratified to hear that the Duke of Richmond wrote *purposely* to the Queen to tell her how admirably Lord Beaconsfield 'had acquitted himself, feeling that he may not himself have done justice to his efforts.' Considering the Duke's former position, the Queen thinks it very handsome and loyal of him.

The Opposition's conduct has done them no good, but it was necessary there should be these debates.

She thinks Bismarck is making much mischief. We may be driven to draw closer to France.

This was the only speech which Beaconsfield made during the session on the Eastern Question. Though, as his correspondence proves, his attention was directed during the whole period almost exclusively to foreign affairs, he left to the Foreign Secretary the parliamentary exposition, in the House of Lords, of the policy of the Government. For an effacement which naturally provoked public comment there were many reasons. It had been his practice, from his first days of leadership in office in 1852, to leave departmental matters to be dealt with in Parliament by the departmental chiefs; he admired Derby's capacity and authority in addressing the House of Lords; and, at any rate in the earlier months of the session, he was not dissatisfied with the attitude which his Foreign Minister took up. Then, in spite of the agitation in the country, there was in the Lords comparatively little question of Government policy, and therefore not much reason for Government defence. In the Commons, where vehement attacks were made by Gladstone and the Radicals, Beaconsfield could not be present to answer, and adequate defence, supported on occasion by large majorities, was offered by Northcote, Hardy, and Cross. Besides, after war had begun between Russia and Turkey, there was general approval of the policy of neutrality adopted by the Government; and

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Beaconsfield, in view of the divergent tendencies of his colleagues, strongly deprecated discussion as to eventual action in certain contingencies.

But the weightiest and most compelling reason of all for silence and inaction in the Lords was the reason which had already driven him from the Commons—ill-health. Constant attacks of gout, bronchitis, and asthma throughout the year, till he obtained some relief from Dr. Kidd, whom he consulted for the first time in November, made it necessary for him to husband his little strength for the direction of policy in Cabinet. Even the speech just quoted was delivered during illness, and resulted in an aggravated return of his complaint.

To Lady Bradford.

(*In pencil.*) 2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *Monday* [? *Feb.* 26, 1877].—Your letter is most welcome to me, and I send you the first line I have written, for my correspondence with the Great Lady, tho' frequent, is telegraphic.

I have had a fair night, and the first one with[ou]t pain.

The attack has been very severe, and unexpected, as I have been guarding against its contemplated occurrence for the last six weeks. It has always been menacing: in fact I spoke in the gout on D. of Arg.'s motion, and that settled it.

I hope I have nothing now to fight against but weakness, for I can scarcely walk across the room; but I have the rallying power—or had, I shd. rather say.

What ought to rally me now is the prospect of having defeated Gort[cha]k[off] and baffled Bismarck, and secured European peace, and, greater than defeating G. and B.—keeping the Cab. together! . . .

To Queen Victoria.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *Feb.* 27, 1877.—Lord Beaconsfield . . . thanks your Majesty for your Majesty's gracious letter.

He should be quite unhappy, if he had not the honor and gratification of waiting on your Majesty, when your Majesty is in London. He thinks if he did not see your Majesty, he should never get quite well.

There is much to confer about, and, perhaps, by that time,

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some important issues will have been decided, and decided to your Majesty's pleasure.

The Parliamentary collapse of the 'Eastern Question' agitation is almost unprecedented: so rapid and so complete.

Lord Beaconsfield wishes to consult your Majesty also about Church affairs. The hostility of the Ritualists to your Majesty's Government, but especially to himself, is rancorous. They never will pardon the 'Public Worship Act.' Lord Beaconsfield thinks it one of the most memorable Acts of your Majesty's reign, and it shows how great is the power of the Sovereign in this country, if firm and faithfully served: for the Act would never have passed, nay, would never have been introduced, had it not been for your Majesty.

The 'Titles' Act the same. Both Bills, certainly the first, were passed without the support of the Cabinet. And yet both are great Acts, and most efficacious. . . .

Turkey and Russia both occupied the winter months in proceedings which were meant to impress the world with their good faith and moderation, but which failed in each case to produce the desired result. The Sultan affected to put the new Constitution into operation, and in opening the Ottoman Parliament in great state in March declared that his disagreement with the Powers and their wishes was rather one of method than of substance. But he had previously dismissed and degraded Midhat Pasha, the author of that Constitution, and had appointed a reactionary as Grand Vizier in his place. The Tsar, on his side, professing a desire still to work in accord with the rest of Europe, inquired through Gortchakoff what were the intentions of the Powers in view of the Porte's refusal to meet their wishes—a refusal which touched 'the dignity and peace of Europe.' He desired to have this information, he significantly added, 'before deciding on the course which he may think it right to follow.' One anxiety was removed from Europe by the signing of a definite peace between Turkey and Serbia.

Beaconsfield was anxious to gain time, and so to prevent the outbreak of hostilities, and his suggestions to Derby were inspired by that idea.

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To Lord Derby.

10, DOWNING ST., *Feb.* 9, '77.—You must pardon the roughness of this communication, but I am in the gout, which is fatal to finished composition, and penmanship.

The position of affairs is most critical, and requires decision.

I believe that, at no moment, was Russia more anxious for peace, than the present. She is perfectly conscious of the intrigues of Bismarck to involve her in a struggle, which, whatever the ultimate result, must be materially disastrous to her; but she must have a golden bridge. The Moscow speech, and the host on the Pruth, render this necessary.

If war begins, I think it will end in partition. I cannot learn that Turkey has any adequate resources: no money; not many men. In that case we must have a decided course, and seize, at the fitting time, what is necessary for the security of our Empire. No one will resist us, either at the time, or afterwards.

But can war be avoided? Only by a reply to Gortchakoff's note, or a negotiation with Russia through the Ambassador here, which will construct the golden bridge.

The last *coup d'état* at Constantinople may assist us.

If the Porte concedes the three following points, what we desire might be obtained.

Midhat could not, or would not; the Sultan can and may.

1. That the Vali should be appointed for a fixed term, removable only on recommendation of some Turkish authority independent of the Minister of the day: say, a vote of their Senate.

2. That the Provincial Assembly should have the control over the raising and spending of some considerable portion of the direct taxes. Query, tithes?

3. That there should be a police and a Militia containing Xtians in proportion to the population.

I think if the Porte would concede these, they might have a fixed term to carry them into full effect: say, eighteen months.

He who gains time, gains everything. By that period, France will be armed.

I think something like this would be accepted at St. Petersburg.

I don't fancy the country will stand *laisser faire*, but they will back us, I believe, in whatever we do, provided we are doing.

2, WHITEHALL G'DNS, [*March* 2, '77].—You must pardon an unhappy correspondent, who, in addition to other sufferings, has gout in his eye!

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If the genl. draft, in its present form, is to prevail, there can be no doubt that your drt. conclusion is infinitely the preferable one.

But I frankly tell you, I don't like the general draft. I say nothing about its style—what I call 'the carrying out' style—which is too common in F. O., and which has this merit, that it contrasts with the terse and lucid corrections of the chief, which always makes me wish that, on eminent occasions like the present, he should trust to no pen but his own.

It is the general conception of the reply to which I object.

There runs throughout all Gort.'s circular an assumption which ought to be corrected—an assumption as to the *raison d'être* of the Conference.

The Powers were mediators: they were invited by the Porte to mediate: by no one was the position of the Powers, as mediators, and the character and object in which, and for which, they made these proposals to Turkey, more clearly defined than by the Plenipos. of Russia at the Conference.

As we were all mediators only, the refusal of the Porte to adopt our recommendations was no offence to the dignity of Europe.

Time would not allow me to attempt a sketch, even were I physically capable, but I throw out these rough lines.

If the draft is to remain, see that the word reform, etc., do not occur too often, and too slangishly.

The Tsar was not content with merely issuing Gortchakoff's circular, but reinforced it by a special mission to the various Courts of Europe. The chosen envoy was Ignatieff, long Russian Ambassador at Constantinople, whose Pan-Slavonic intrigues had contributed so materially to produce the Eastern crisis, and whom, accordingly, Beaconsfield was by no means disposed to welcome when in the course of his tour he reached England in March. Salisbury, however, who had established friendly relations with Ignatieff at the Conference, invited him, to Beaconsfield's dismay, to be his guest at Hatfield, and Beaconsfield subsequently thought it proper himself to give a banquet in honour of the special envoy and his wife.

To Lady Bradford.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *March* 16.—. . . The Ignatieff arrival is a thunderbolt; nothing cd. be more inopportune, and

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nothing more awkward than his going to Hatfield. I am asked to meet him there Saty. and Sunday, and was very glad I cd. conscientiously refuse both days, being engaged to Ld. D. to-morrow, and to the Peels on Sunday.

Absolute dismay at headquarters about the visit: telegrams and letters about it every hour. It seems that Ld. Salisbury wrote to him a week ago, suggesting that 'when all this turmoil was over' he shd. pay Ld. S. a visit at Hatd. . . .

March 19.—. . . I have been out of sorts, as you know, for these three months. I attended the Cabinet on Saturday morning pretty well, but in the afternoon felt very ill with feverish catarrh. I cd. hardly get thro' the dinner, of wh. I did not partake, and stole away as soon as I possibly could. Yesterday I was very ill; but last night I had a fair rest, and got rid of my fever, tho' I feel dreadfully weak. I cd. not put off my guests, and think I shall get thro' it pretty well. But I shall not go to the H. of Lords to-day, tho' I have some business there. . . .

March 22.—. . . I hardly thought the day wd. ever end, or that myself shd. last as long. The dinner was successful, tho' I cd. not partake of it, or contribute to its grace and gaiety. Prince Hal,[1] who had invited himself, and for the sake of the Ignatieffs, took out Madame, as arranged by himself. His [other] neighbour [was] Lady Londonderry. . . . Dss. Louise[2] sate on my right; we had a longer table than usual, and I sate in the middle. . . . Monty sate on the other side of Madame [Ignatieff] . . . and got on very well with the great lady, who is pretty and, they say, very agreeable, except when he recommended to her some Apollinaris water. Not the custom of the Russian ladies. When they offered her wine, 'Sherry or Manzanilla? etc., etc.,' she always answered, 'Any one,' but never refused 'any one.' But is very calm and collected, and must have had therefore an early training at it. . . . The fine ladies, who had heard that Mme. Ig. was even finer than themselves, and gave herself airs, determined not to yield without a struggle. Ly. Londy. staggered under the jewels of the 3 united families of Stewart and Vane and Londonderry, and on her right arm, set in diamonds, the portrait of the Empress of Russia—an imperial present to the great Marchioness. Mme. Ig. had many diamonds, and a fine costume, but paled before this. As for Louise, she set everything on fire, even the neighbouring Thames; her face still flushed with the Lincoln race-course, her form in a spick-and-span new dress, scarcely finished, and her hair *à la* Marie Antoinette, studded with diamonds, wh.

[1] See above, p. 98.

[2] Of Manchester.

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SELINA COUNTESS OF BRADFORD.

From a portrait by Edward Clifford.

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by the bye were stuck in every part of her costume. 'Lady Bradford ought to be here,' she said. 'Why is not Lady Bd. here?' And echo answered, Why? . . .

I continued very ill yesterday and had a bad night; but they thought it better not to send for Gull to-day. . . .

March 24.—. . . Two hours after noon, I shall be at Hughenden. They say I must go out of town, even if it be only for 8 and 40 hours. . . .

Yesterday was the most important meeting of the Cabinet which has yet been holden, and I trust we shall never hear any more Bathism,[1] Lyddonism (*sic*), really Gladstonism, within those walls. . . .

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *March* 27, 1877.—. . . I made my voyage to Windsor yesterday in a brougham with closed windows, and so returned. Nor was I kept loitering in the corridor, wh. is a most windy place, but found rooms for me ready with good fires: so I think I have escaped all perils. . . .

My audience was most agreeable, and the longest I ever had. It exceeded the hour, and was never dull, or flagged for a moment. She wanted very much to know all about the Ignatieff dinner party. . . .

She talked to me a great deal about Hughenden; she has quite made up her mind to pay me a visit. 'But it must be in the summer; now you are in H. of L. you will always be free.' . . . I think you will have to come down to receive her. At any rate she will see your portrait in the library. . . .

April 5.—. . . [The equinox] has a debilitating effect on many persons; on myself especially; I am not the same person I was 8 and 40 hours ago; my appetite waning, and weak and chilly. I thought we had escaped these, I concluded necessary, but disagreeable gales. Every year, the same illusion, or rather every half-year, for, vernal or autumnal, they equally upset me. . . .

April 9.—. . . The change of air has entirely relieved me of my cough, wh. had harassed me, more or less, for 3 months, but my eyes trouble me much, and I think my retirement from society a necessity. Whe[the]r I can go on steering the ship, I hardly know, but I may be turned out of office, wh. will solve that diff[icult]y. . . .

Ignatieff's mission had some effect on those members of the Cabinet who were especially interested in the cause of the Eastern Christians, as appears from a royal letter to the Prime Minister.

[1] Lord Bath, a leading Tory, sympathised with the 'Atrocity' agitation.

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From Queen Victoria.

WINDSOR CASTLE, *March* 21, '77.—The Queen . . . trusts the Cabinet will be very firm, and Lord Derby seemed so yesterday. She is prepared to speak or write to good but nervous and somewhat weak and sentimental Lord Carnarvon, if necessary, as well as to Lord Salisbury. This mawkish sentimentality for people who hardly deserve the name of real Christians, as if they were more God's creatures and our fellow-creatures than every other nation abroad, and forgetting the great interests of this great country—is really incomprehensible.

Only say if the Queen can do anything. . . .

The Russian proposal which so moved the Queen appears to have been that Turkey should be invited to disarm while Russia retained her troops mobilised on the frontier. Beaconsfield's tact and good management of his colleagues prevented any weakening on this point; and on March 31 the Powers made yet one more effort to get the Eastern Question in train for settlement without war. On that day, at the instance of Russia, a protocol was signed in London by Derby, as Foreign Secretary, and by the representatives on the spot of all the Treaty Powers. They took cognisance with satisfaction of the peace concluded by Turkey with Serbia and of the arrangement in process of completion with Montenegro, and invited the Porte to proceed at once to reduce its army to a peace footing, and to put in hand without delay the reforms promised for the Christian populations. If the Porte accepted and showed signs of acting on this advice, and would send an envoy to St. Petersburg to treat of disarmament, the Tsar, his Ambassador was authorised to declare, would also consent to disarm. The Powers proposed to watch carefully through their ambassadors and local agents the manner in which the Porte's promises were carried out. If their hopes were disappointed, they announced that such 'a state of affairs would be incompatible with their interests and those of Europe in general'; and in that case they reserved to themselves 'to consider in common as to the means

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which they may deem best fitted to secure the well-being of the Christian populations and the interests of the general peace.' Derby added to the protocol on behalf of the British Government an emphatic declaration that, as they had only signed it in the interests of European peace, it should be regarded as null and void if reciprocal disarmament and peace were not attained.

'So the protocol is signed, and everybody writes to me about our triumph and the humiliation of Russia! I can't yet quite make head or tail of it.' This was Beaconsfield's own comment, next day, in a letter to Salisbury. To Lady Bradford he wrote, 'I think affairs look well, and should be more certain, did they not seem incredible.' It hardly appears as if he expected much result from the protocol. If so, he was not disappointed. Turkey, though warned by Derby of the unwisdom of refusing this friendly overture, energetically protested against the tutelage and supervision which it would impose upon her, and appealed to the provisions of the Treaty of Paris guaranteeing her integrity and independence. Russia—in spite of her responsibility for a protocol which was in no sense an ultimatum to the Porte, but contemplated that it should have time to carry out reforms, and in case of failure that there should be a further consultation of the European Areopagus—continued and perfected her preparations for war; and on April 21 the Tsar announced that his patience was exhausted, and ordered his armies to cross the frontier. The season for campaigning had come.

Derby had regarded war as 'inevitable' ever since the Porte had rejected the protocol, but neither he nor the Government regarded it as therefore justifiable. To the Pan-Slavonic party in Russia, and to their counterparts in England, the supporters of Gladstone's agitation, Russia's invasion of Turkey appeared to be a righteous and unselfish crusade, in which the more extreme fanatics in this country only regretted that England had not taken a share. But disapproval and anxiety were

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necessarily the sentiments of those statesmen who, like Beaconsfield, bore in mind the persistent and unscrupulous advance of Russia both in Europe and in Asia over a long period of years, who realised the importance to British and imperial interests of Constantinople and the Straits, of Egypt and the Suez Canal, and who held that the stability and orderly progress of Europe depended on the observance of treaties which Russia's isolated action disregarded. The Queen was passionately of this opinion. Before the Tsar had completely exposed his hand she wrote, on April 17, to Beaconsfield: 'The Queen feels more and more anxious lest we should be found powerless and receive a slap in the face from these false Russians, and wishes the Cabinet to consider seriously what measures we should take to show that we are not going to follow Mr. Gladstone's view of giving up all to the beneficent and tender mercies of Russia.' Her Majesty composed a letter to be read to the Cabinet, and in a private note accompanying it told Beaconsfield that 'she has made it firm, general, and conciliatory, but to him she will say (and he may make use of it) that, if England is to kiss Russia's feet, she will not be a party to the humiliation of England and would lay down her crown. She did say as much to Lord Carnarvon the other day.' Here is the letter, which was read to the Cabinet on Saturday, April 21, and which, Beaconsfield told the Queen, 'produced a marked effect':

From Queen Victoria.

OSBORNE, *April* 19, '77.—The present moment is one of great gravity, and requires to be met with calmness, firmness, and complete unanimity. Any difference of opinion if known would be most serious and would encourage the Opposition in their harassing, tho' hitherto fruitless, attacks on the Government.

It is natural that everyone should have their own opinion, especially on religion; but, when the policy of Great Britain comes into consideration and her greatest if not vital interests (viz., our Indian Empire) are involved, *all* private feelings should be overruled, and the one desire should be to agree

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on the policy most likely to conduce to the welfare of the country. While it is obviously necessary to be extremely cautious and prudent, this must not be carried too far, so as not to have the appearance of feebleness and vacillation.

The Queen appeals to the feelings of patriotism which she knows animate her Government, and is certain that every member of it will feel the absolute necessity of showing a bold and united front to the enemy in the country as well as outside it.

No time should be lost or wasted in deliberating on the best steps to be taken in this momentous crisis.

It is not the question of upholding Turkey; it is the question of Russian or British supremacy in the world!

When the war broke out, Her Majesty's indignation was great, and she had no doubt as to the kind of policy which Beaconsfield and his Cabinet ought to adopt.

From Queen Victoria.

WINDSOR CASTLE, *April* 25, '77.—The news from Mr. Layard is very important. We must not submit tamely to Russia's advance and to the dangers in Egypt. Whatever we intend to do ought to be clearly explained to the other Powers. The Russian circular is not exact even as to facts. The recollection of the facts connected with the Crimean War and what led to it are fresh in the Queen's memory, and the contrast to the present moment with the feeling of indignation which filled everyone then is very painful to the Queen. She wishes no general war—God knows! for no one abhors it more than she does: but then there ought to be an understanding that we cannot allow the Russians to occupy Constantinople, and that we must see that this is promised or the consequences may be serious. To let it be thought that we shall never fight and that England will submit to Egypt being under Russia would be to abdicate the position of Great Britain as one of the Great Powers—to which she never will submit, and another must wear the crown if this is intended.

The Queen may very well have been echoing in her letter the sentiments which she had frequently heard from Beaconsfield. He was at any rate clear what the course of the British Government ought to be. It should express its disapproval of the Russian action, as inconsistent

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both with the Treaty of Paris and with the London protocol. It could not intervene, as in the Crimean War, on Turkey's behalf, owing to her misconduct and the consequent alienation from her of popular sympathy in Britain. It should therefore adopt a position of neutrality in the war, but of watchful and conditional neutrality, and should at the outset obtain a pledge from Russia to respect British interests in Turkey, such as Constantinople, Egypt, and the Suez Canal. At the same time it should make preparations to enforce its claims, in case victory should tempt Russia to evade her promises. Moreover, it should look out for, and seize, any favourable opportunity for mediation, so that the war might be brought to an end before the Russian armies approached any of the vital points. It was in this sense that he counselled the Cabinet on May 1. Corry has left a note of this meeting: 'Lord B. suddenly taken ill, while Cabinet sitting: had to go to bed. I wrote to inform H.M. of his inability to attend H.M. at 6, and was summoned to report what had occurred in Cabinet. The occasion was the *first real* unfolding, by Lord B., of his policy in the East.' Corry reported to his sick chief the result of his audience.

From Montagu Corry.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE, *May* 1, '77. 7.10.—I have been more than twenty minutes with the Queen, who was more gracious and condescendingly charming than words can express.

My tidings, I need hardly say, gave her great satisfaction, and she bids me tell you so.

I am to send her to-morrow morning a *résumé* of what I told her, and, if you are not materially better, I am to come in your place to report the result of to-morrow's Cabinet.

She spoke freely of Gladstone, the Duchess of Edinburgh, and so on, as if I had been her favourite Prime Minister!

She sends you her anxious hopes that you will have a good night, and injunctions to have the Cabinet at your house, if you are not better to-morrow.

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To Queen Victoria.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *May* 5, 1877.—Lord Beaconsfield with his humble duty to your Majesty:

The Cabinet settled to-day the despatch to Russia, warning that Power of the circumstances which would render it impossible for your Majesty's Government to continue a policy of abstention and neutrality. Lord Beaconsfield hopes, and thinks, your Majesty will not be displeased with it. It seems to him to be spirited, and though courteous, and even conciliatory, most decided and unmistakable. . . .

Thus, though the Cabinet by no means considered themselves bound to the forceful action which Beaconsfield in certain circumstances contemplated, they were ready to take the first step. In a despatch which Beaconsfield afterwards described as 'the charter of our policy,' 'the diapason of our diplomacy,' Derby definitely warned the Russian Government off the Suez Canal, the Persian Gulf, and the Bosphorus as points where British interests arose; and Gortchakoff, in reply, as definitely promised to respect these points. It was not, however, enough to have a policy; it was necessary to have a man of ability, character, and resolution to carry it out at the danger spot, Constantinople. Beaconsfield insisted that Elliot could not go back. 'What we want,' he wrote on April 10 to Lady Bradford, 'is a man of the necessary experience and commanding mind, at this moment, at Constantinople—and one not too scrupulous. But such men are rare everywhere.' Beaconsfield's choice fell on Layard, whose strength of character he had experienced over the Spanish Question, and who, as an old Foreign Under-Secretary in Palmerston's Government, had every sympathy with the Palmerstonian and traditional method of treating the Eastern Question. The Queen, who was far too great to bear a grudge, was much pleased, she told Beaconsfield, with Layard's 'tone' in conversation. 'He is very strong upon the vital interests of this country, which Mr. Gladstone and some of his followers have entirely forgotten.'

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The Opposition had utilised the pause after the signing of the protocol and before the outbreak of war to raise debates in both Houses, but without much profit to themselves or damage to the Government.

To Lady Bradford.

10, DOWNING STREET, *April* 14, 1877.—My third *séance* to Von Angeli[1] this morning. It is said to be a great success. And then a Cabinet, wh. is just over. And in a few minutes, the head of the engineer officers, whom I sent to Constantinople nearly a year ago, will be with me, with maps, and plans, and estimates, and all sorts of things, wh. perhaps will never be wanted; for it is very clear that Russia does not like the war at all wh. she has brought about by her own intrigues and miscalculated swagger.

Last night the great Whig reconnaissance ended very disastrously for its concocters. The House of Commons was crammed full; Harty-Tarty did very well, but Hardy blew the whole thing out of the water, like a torpedo! Harcourt who had got up the whole scheme, rose to answer him, with an immense speech and endless papers; but was so mortified by everybody rushing to dinner, except the habitual bores, who never dine—at least at late hours—that he broke down, quite demoralised; and the debate never rallied, except when Roebuck fired a well-aimed and destructive shot. We are to have the same farce in the House of Lords on Monday, if Granville still has stomach for it.

Von Angeli's studio is the Queen's private dining-room. and it is furnished, and entirely fitted up, with the Pagoda furniture of the Brighton Pavilion. The fantastic scene, the artist himself, very good-looking, picturesque, and a genius, the P. Minister seated in a crimson chair on a stage, and the Private Secretary reading the despatches, with his boxes, would make a good *genre* picture!

April 17.—. . . The great debate in the Lords collapsed. Granville made a speech, wh. entered on no great questions

[1] The Queen had asked her favourite Minister to have his portrait painted for her by her favourite artist. She wrote from Osborne, March 29: 'The Queen has now a favour to ask of Lord Beaconsfield. It is that he should be painted for her, for Windsor, by the great artist Angeli, who painted herself, who is coming to England immediately. It would only be the head, and as he is wonderfully quick he would require but very few sittings. Lord Beaconsfield's career is one of the most remarkable in the annals of the Empire, and none of her Ministers have ever shown her more consideration and kindness than he has.' A replica of the picture, which is not a pleasing likeness, was given by the Queen to Beaconsfield, and is still at Hughenden.

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of policy, but was a tissue of verbal criticism and petty points. Derby, who, to my pleased surprise, is a first-rate debater in the Ho. of Lords, wh. he never was in the Ho. of Commons, answered him on every point, so completely that it was impossible to sustain the debate, wh. after some ordinary remarks of Ld. Lansdowne, and some nonsense from the maniac, Dudley, like the Rhine never reached the sea, but vanished in mud.

So I went home to a dinnerless hearth, and feasted on sandwiches wh. were to have been my banquet in the H. of C. [? H. of L.].

To Anne Lady Chesterfield.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *April* 29, 1877.—. . . Gladstone and the real leaders of the Whigs seem at length to have separated, and he is going to take his own line, and move a vote of censure on the Government, wh. they will not support. I am not afraid of his motions, and believe he loses, every day, weight with the country, but the mischief he has done is incalculable.

The attacks on the Government in the Commons culminated, after the war had begun, in a series of resolutions, submitted by Gladstone, which amounted in effect to a policy of joining Russia in her crusade. This programme could not well be supported by the Opposition leaders, who were on the whole satisfied with the Ministerial policy of watchful neutrality; but a compromise was patched up between them and their former chief, under which, while they merely asked the House to disengage British interests from the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire, Gladstone was free to advocate, in eloquent language, the coercion of the Porte, in alliance with Russia, for the liberation of the subject Christian races in Turkey. But, after Cross, in a convincing speech, had pointed out that no British Government could be indifferent to a threat to the Suez Canal, to Egypt, to the Dardanelles, or to Constantinople, the House, by the large majority of 131, declined, at this critical moment, to entertain any resolution which might embarrass Ministers in the maintenance of peace and the protection of British interests.

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By this vote, which was taken on May 14, the Parliamentary situation was regularised, and there was little further trouble for Ministers from outside attack for the remainder of the session. But the stress of war aggravated the tendencies to internal disagreement which had already appeared in the Cabinet during the Bulgarian agitation and the Constantinople Conference. The complicity of Turkish civil and military authorities, if not of the Porte itself, in the Bulgarian atrocities, its neglect to punish the culprits, and its stubborn refusal to accept the reforms demanded by the united representatives of the Powers, had produced in the Cabinet, as in the country, a strong indisposition again to be allied in arms with so barbarous and purblind a State. Quite half of the Cabinet were more or less affected by this feeling, and particularly Carnarvon, Salisbury, Northcote, and Derby. The whole Cabinet, indeed, were convinced, with their chief, that there was a point at which Russia must be checked, beyond which she must not be permitted to advance. But not only were there differences as to where this point ought exactly to be fixed; there was also a reluctance, amounting in individual cases to a refusal, to recognise that, in the possible, if not probable, contingency of victorious Russia's defiant persistence, this accepted policy involved war, or at least an unmistakable threat of war—and war, as in the Crimean days, by Turkey's side. They would not realise that it was necessary, not merely to proclaim a policy, but to convince Russia, by deeds as well as words, that the British Ministry were in earnest in their resolve to carry it out, even, in the last resort, by taking up arms on Turkey's behalf.

This prospect was clearly envisaged by Beaconsfield, and he devoted his energies throughout the year, with masterly skill and patience, to bringing his colleagues to recognise facts as he recognised them, and to make, however tardily, the necessary preparations. Constantly hampered as he was by their hesitations, and racked,

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moreover, by incessant gout, he never allowed himself to be permanently discouraged. He was warmly supported and heartened by the Queen, whose indignation at Russia's conduct was indeed of so burning a character as to be even embarrassing to a Minister who was bound to take care not to venture beyond the point where he could definitely count on public support.

Northcote gives us in his memorandum a vivid picture of Ministerial divergences.

It cannot be denied that there were real, though suppressed, differences of opinion and feeling among the members of the Cabinet with regard to our Eastern policy. We never came to an actual division, and we may be held to have agreed to each step as it came; but the ultimate views of some of us differed from those of others, and we more than once, after adopting a particular measure one day, found ourselves on the next adopting another wholly inconsistent with the intentions, at all events, of the day before. The Prime Minister was most anxious to keep us all together. Lord Derby was chiefly bent on keeping us out of war, but was ready to go almost any length which his colleagues desired in writing despatches, apparently not perceiving that the strength of his language would be held to involve, under possible and probable circumstances, the necessity for corresponding action. In the earlier days of our difficulties the peace party in the Cabinet may be said to have consisted, under Lord Derby, of Cairns, Cross, the Duke of Richmond, Salisbury, Carnarvon, and myself. As time wore on, Cairns, Cross, and Richmond seemed somewhat to modify their views. I was much in communication with Salisbury and Carnarvon, and I was also in communication with Derby, between whom and the other two there was some coldness. Carnarvon was strongly impressed with the belief that the Prime Minister was desirous of war. Derby, judging more correctly, said to me: 'I don't think he desires war; he desires to place England in a "commanding position."' The Prime Minister himself said to me more than once that his great fear was that Derby's policy would lead us to war; and, looking back, I am more and more convinced that there was much ground for the apprehension.

It was in this spring that Beaconsfield began to be seriously uneasy as to the adequacy of Derby for the Foreign Secretaryship at a time of national stress. In

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the previous autumn he had admired the strong stand which his colleague had taken against the enthusiasts who were eager to drive England into the forcible coercion of Turkey. Now, when it was necessary to put a limit on the advance of Russia, he saw the same temperament, which produced the autumn attitude he admired, responsible for a policy which, save for excellent despatches, was purely passive. A belated attempt was indeed made to secure the real co-operation of Austria; but, as she was already secretly bound to Russia, nothing for the moment came of it.

To Lord Derby.

HUGHENDEN, *May* 22, '77.—I think affairs look very bad for us, and that some other body will yet fall before the Ottoman Empire tumbles. The tactics of the Opposition are clear: they were laid down by Harcourt in the debate. He distinctly laid the ground for an appeal to the people against the Ministry, whose want of foresight and courage will have compelled us to acquiesce either in a ruinous war, or a humiliating peace. Having successfully acted on a nervous and divided Cabinet, and prevented anything being done, they will now turn round and say, 'This is the way you protect British interests!' They will probably turn us out in this Parliament, or they will force us to a dissolution under the influence of a disastrous defeat abroad.

When do you expect the answer from Austria? I never thought anything would come of it, but there is a strong party in the Cabinet which does, and would agree to nothing till it was tried. I think you ought to press, and press hard, for a reply. Every moment is now golden. Austria never acts, only writes despatches, as the Duke said of Metternich in very similar circumstances to the present.

Even Loftus sees thro' Gortk. and Schou. I am sorry you gave such free warren to the latter, but, as you mentioned, we are not bound by those words. . . .

A Government can only die once: it is better to die with glory, than vanish in an ignominious end. The country would still rally round British interests: in three months' time, Brit. interests will be in the mud.

I have written this with difficulty, for my hand has relapsed.

From Lord Derby.

KNOWSLEY, PRESCOT, *May* 24, '77.—I am very sorry for your renewed attack of the enemy—knowing from home

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recollections what an infliction it is—and not less so that you take a desponding view of the situation. You have been so often right when others were wrong that I hardly like to express dissent: but I am quite sure that in the middle class at least the feeling is so strong against war that you would lose more support by asking money for an expedition than you could gain by the seizure of an important military position. . . .

To Lord Derby.

HUGHENDEN, *May* 25, '77.—The same messenger, who brings me your letter, brings me a box from the Lord Chancellor. It is a very distressing one, as he does not see affairs in the light you do, and foreseeing great disgrace to us as a Government, attacks from the Opposition and repudiation by our own friends, he shrinks from encountering a position of ignominy tho' he detests 'the appearance of a selfish disloyalty to the colleagues of my whole public life.'

The situation he thinks deeply critical. 'We have defined Brit. interests, and said we would protect them, and we are not taking any real step for their protection. It is quite apparent, that Russia is trying to bridge over the few weeks, which will make her safe against any action of ours. She will then be potentially master of Constantinople and will arrange the passage of the Straits, as she and Germany please, and will snap her fingers at us. Then the Opposition will turn upon us, and our own friends will join them.'

I must say that all this expresses very much my own views, and indeed I often ask myself, if you had resolved to do nothing, why not have accepted Bismarck's offer?

Nothing can justify isolation on the part of England but a determination to act.

The Lord Chancellor wants the Cabinet to be called together and to review the situation again, preliminarily to a final decision. I suppose it will break up.

Altho' I expect nothing from Austria, I feel we must wait for the reply, provided it is not postponed, and some of our colls. are even abroad. I don't think we could meet before a week.

I hope you will be able to make this out, but I am very suffering, feet and hands.

From Lord Derby.

FOREIGN OFFICE, [? *May* 26, 1877].—I will do as you like, but I do not see what there is to discuss in the present state of affairs. And I doubt as to the wisdom of 'talking over' things when no action is possible. Men only work each other

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up into a state of agitation, and are then ready to rush into anything rash to relieve it.

Why does not Cairns tell us the points which he wants considered ?

Beaconsfield's personal views as to the precautions which the British Government ought to take are clearly set out in a 'secret' letter which he wrote at this period to the new Ambassador at Constantinople. The vigorous action which he suggested was as unwelcome to the Sultan as to the majority of the British Cabinet. Gladstone's agitation, Derby's despatches, the Constantinople Conference, and the London protocol, had made the Sultan nearly as suspicious of England as of Russia, and it was some months before Layard could make the Porte understand that Beaconsfield sincerely desired to preserve Turkey's integrity and independence.

To Austen Henry Layard.

Secret. 2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *June* 6, '77.—I find, at the last moment and on a busy day, I have the opportunity of communicating with you by a trusty hand. Understand, this is not an official communication, but one strictly personal, and of the utmost confidence.

The campaign has hitherto realised my anticipations: disastrous in Asia; on the Danube, doubtful, but big with menacing consequences.

Are there no means, notwithstanding the paralysing neutrality in vogue, which might tend, if effected, to maintain generally the *status quo*, and, at the same time, place England in a commanding position when the conditions of peace are discussed ?

Is it impossible for the Porte to invite the presence of our fleet at Constantinople, and for us to accede to the invitation, still asserting our neutrality, on the ground, that we are taking a material guarantee for the observance of existing treaties ?

A maritime movement of that kind could not be hazarded without securing our communications; otherwise, the Russians might be at the Dardanelles before they occupy Constantinople, and our fleet might be caught in a trap. The material guarantee, therefore, should also consist of a military occupation of the Peninsula of Gallipoli by England. Twenty

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thousand men would secure this. We should engage to evacuate this position on the termination of the war.

If such a proposal came from the Porte, I would recommend its adoption by the Cabinet, but the proposal must come from Constantinople.

I wish you would consider these matters, and communicate with me in entire confidence. Time is of inestimable value, as I should think the preparation and despatch of the military portion of the expedition might require ten weeks. It could hardly be delayed later than the passage of the Danube by the Russians, and it would be most appropriate, if that event were the occasion of the appeal to us of the Porte.

I cannot refrain from mentioning my sense of the skill and energy with which your Excellency is conducting the Queen's business at your Court.

The hesitations of the Cabinet caused the greatest distress to the Queen.

From Queen Victoria.

Confidential. BALMORAL, *June* 7, '77.—Since writing to Lord Beaconsfield last night the Queen has had a great deal of very interesting and important conversation with Lord Odo Russell, who she is very sorry to hear has not seen Lord Beaconsfield—and Lord Derby only for a very short time—who said to him he supposed *he had* '*nothing*' to *say* to *him!!!* Before saying anything else, the Queen must tell Lord Beaconsfield in strict confidence that Lord Odo was (as Sir S. Northcote likewise was) struck with the extreme imperturbability of Lord Derby, who actually said—it was enough to say we would not allow certain things and he hoped we should not have to do more! The Queen owns that she is greatly alarmed, and all Lord Odo tells her of the extreme readiness of the Russians and of the dangers of letting them go on makes her tremble lest we should *un beau matin* find them on their way to Constantinople. Lord Odo says that our position abroad and the respect in which everything coming from us is held never was greater, and that they only wait for us to move! He says that he is certain that Russia won't on any account quarrel with us, and that if we speak out very firmly they will stop.

There is, he says, an intimate understanding of some kind or other between the three Powers, which Lord Derby won't believe, as he sometimes is very slow at that, and this it is which makes the Queen suspect Austria. While she has carefully abstained from saying anything about our Austrian

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communications to Lord Odo, she feels sure that Bismarck will hear of it, and that it would be unwise not to try to carry him with us. Pray see Lord Odo and hear all he has to say, which is so clear and well defined. Only let us be firm and hold strong language to Russia and the rest of Europe will follow! Lord Derby must be *made* to move. The Queen feels terribly anxious about this.

Pray be firm in the House of Commons. . . .

Lord Odo quite bears out the Queen's very strong conviction, as well as that of our other Ambassadors, that the language of Mr. Gladstone and others in the autumn and even early part of the session has done the greatest possible mischief, and that Russia has been encouraged to go ahead and go to war thereby. The Queen has taken the opportunity of stating this in strong terms to the Duke of Argyll in replying to a letter of congratulation on her birthday, and of adding at the same time that it is not yet too late 'to act a patriotic part and to desist.'

The Queen thinks the Prince of Wales should know what we hear of the plans and proceedings of Russia and of the extreme danger of being deceived by them. . . .

Pray for God's sake *lose no time* and be *prepared* to act, tho' we may never have to do so. But to threaten, and intend to do nothing, will never do.

Make any use of this letter, only take care not to let Lord Derby see what the Queen says of him. Sir S. Northcote might see it. Should the Queen write to Lord Derby? Pray cypher or telegraph on receiving this and see Lord Odo when he returns to London.

June 9.—The Queen writes a few lines to say she wrote fully and strongly to Lord Derby and told him to show the letter to Lord Beaconsfield. . . .

The Queen is feeling terribly anxious lest delay should cause us to be too late and lose our prestige for ever! It worries her night and day.

To Lord Salisbury.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *June* 14, 1877.—Derby saw Beust yesterday; the conference was long, and, so far as I can understand, D. faithfully made the proposition, as to active alliance, wh. the Cabinet sanctioned. D. pressed for a reply without delay, and said it was, if possible, most desirable it should be laid before Cab. on Saturday next. I think it best, therefore, to have no Cab. till that time, and I will fix it at 3 o'c., so that we may have the morning for the chance of the arrival of the Austrian answer.

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Beust promised to telegraph instantly.

It is but ingenuous to tell you, that the Queen is 'greatly distressed' about 'the very wavering language of Ld. Salisbury, wh. will encourage Russia and the Russian party.' This, with a reply from Ld. Derby, which 'fills her with despair,' 'greatly moves' her. 'Another Sovn. must be got to carry out Ld. Derby's policy.'

Salisbury was no dupe of Russia, but his personal experience, at the Constantinople Conference, of the utter impracticability of the Turkish Government, made him strongly desirous of finding some accommodation with the northern Power which would prevent the hateful possibility of having to fight on Turkey's side. Accordingly, though no one was more impressed than the Indian Secretary by the real menace which Russia's Asiatic advance constituted to the Indian Empire, he, somewhat unwisely, endeavoured during this session to calm public alarm by inviting critics to use large maps, which would magnify, instead of minimising, the distance between Russianised Turkestan and the north-west frontier of India. Beaconsfield was, it appears, unduly apprehensive of Salisbury's anti-Turkish tendency, and he made the first of a series of impassioned appeals to Derby, his colleague from early years, to support him in a policy of active preparation for eventualities. The Queen, never an admirer of Derby's methods, was already looking for a change at the Foreign Office, but Beaconsfield, though sympathising with Her Majesty's feelings, determined to carry Derby with him to the utmost possible distance. Chancellor Cairns told the Queen early in July that Derby 'would go any length, short of declaring war.'

To Lord Derby.

Confidential. 2, WHITEHALL G'DNS, *June* 17, '77.—I hope you will support me at this juncture. It is necessary, that I should take this issue to decide the existence of the present Cabinet. It is quite evident to me, that Lord Salisbury wishes the Russians to enter, and indefinitely occupy, Constantinople, acting, as he has done throughout, under the influence and counsel of Lyddon.

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It is the Conference over again, in which, unquestionably, he much compromised us, tho' both you, and myself, then, treated him with generous magnanimity, which however was thrown away on his sacerdotal convictions.

The Ministry will not be weakened by his secession, and, I think, I can supply his place, and, if necessary, that of others, in a manner, which would commend itself to the country at this exigency.

But your course, on this occasion, is not that of an ordinary colleague. My heart is as much concerned in it as my intelligence, and I wish not to conceal, how grievous would be to me the blow, that severed our long connection and faithful friendship.

My colleagues are bound to no particular course by the vote[1] I am suggesting. I should be sorry to take any future step, which, after mature reflection, did not meet with your particular sanction, and their general approval. All I want now is, to reassure the country, that is alarmed and perplexed; to show, that we are in a state not of puzzled inertness, but of preparedness for action; so to assist negotiations, which will be constantly cropping up, and place ourselves in a position, if there be eventually a crash, to assume a tone, which will be respected.

I write with great difficulty, but am Yours ever, D.

From Lord Derby.

Private. FOREIGN OFFICE, *June* 17, '77.—I will write, or (better) speak to you to-morrow on the whole question. Enough for the present to say that, as far as you and I are concerned, I do not think we shall have any difficulty in agreeing, at least in the present stage of the affair. It seems to me that the vital question is not yet raised; and I hardly anticipate a disruption until it is raised. No doubt, Salisbury's language was ominous, but he did not absolutely declare himself against preparation.

I need not add that a political separation between us two would be as painful to me as it could possibly be to you.

To Queen Victoria.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *June* 23, '77.—Lord Beaconsfield with his humble duty to your Majesty.

The Cabinet was quite satisfactory. It resolved to take a firm tone on Monday, and, to prevent mistakes, we agreed upon, and recorded in writing, the answer to be given to the

[1] A vote of credit.

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'interpellation' of Mr. Gladstone, or his followers. The assembling of the Cabinet immediately on Lord Beaconsfield's return from the royal audience, was food for the quidnuncs, and Lord Beaconsfield is told, that the Ball at the Palace was rife with rumors. Lord Beaconsfield was not present, being obliged to avoid, as much as possible, late hours and hot rooms. He saw Lord Derby and made the remarks to him which your Majesty wished. . . . He defended and not unsuccessfully his language to the Austrian Ambassador, as he said the great object of Austria was to see England accomplish what was necessary—unaided: and that, if Austria suspected that England would not act alone, there might be an increased inducement to join us.

Poor Mr. Hunt goes to Homburg to-night. His case seems very bad. Lord Beaconsfield gave him a kind message from your Majesty, which seemed to light up his eyes for a moment. He has behaved bravely and truly in the great business, and redeemed some peccadilloes which, besides, it is not likely he will ever have the opportunity to repeat.[1]

From Queen Victoria.

WINDSOR CASTLE, *June* 25, '77.—The Queen thanks Lord Beaconsfield for his letter of yesterday and for the copy of the terms in which the answer is to be given to-day. They are excellent.

The reports in Mr. Layard's last letter of the 13th inst., which the Queen saw yesterday, are very alarming! Surely Lord Derby cannot be indifferent to the dangers expressed therein? Warning after warning arrives and he seems to take it all without saying a word!! Such a Foreign Minister the Queen really never remembers!

The news to-day continues very unpleasant and makes the Queen very anxious. The feeling against Russia is getting stronger and stronger! Only *do* not delay. . . .

The Queen has been thinking very much of what Lord Beaconsfield told her, and she thinks that in fact public affairs would be benefited if Lord Lyons replaced Lord Derby, as the former has such knowledge of foreign countries. Lord Clarendon had the same, and Lord Granville also to a great extent: so had Lord Malmesbury. But unfortunately Lord Derby has *not*. If he and Lord Salisbury want to resign, however, the Queen thinks they should be told that she could not accept their resignations now, but that they should be relieved later. Could not that be done? . . .

[1] Ward Hunt died on July 29, 1877; and W. H. Smith was appointed First Lord of the Admiralty in his place.

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To Queen Victoria.

Confidential. 2, WHITEHALL G'DNS, *June* 26, '77.—. . . It would not be possible to retain the services of Lords Salisbury and Derby in the manner your Majesty suggests. But they would not think of resigning at present. They are prepared to support the vote of credit, tho' they may shrink from applying the proceeds of that vote to the purposes which your Majesty and Lord Beaconsfield approve. But some time must necessarily elapse before that issue is to be decided. At present, it is quite evident from the Austrian note, that Vienna sees no objection to the Gallipoli expedition, and if Germany can arrive at an understanding with us on the same head, Lord Beaconsfield believes that the existing Cabinet will sanction the expedition; and that will put all right very soon. It would bring peace. Lord Beaconsfield has had a satisfactory interview with Lord Odo this morning. . . .

To Lord Derby your Majesty would do well to repeat your Majesty's earnest desire and purpose, that the Russians should not be permitted to 'occupy' Constantinople, or to enter it. Your Majesty need not, at this moment, enter into details. Lord Beaconsfield is giving ceaseless attention to affairs, and will come down, one morning, and ask for an audience, when matters become ripe.

From Queen Victoria.

Confidential. WINDSOR CASTLE, *June* 27, '77.—The Queen must write to Lord Beaconsfield again and with the greatest earnestness on the very critical state of affairs. From so many does she hear of the great anxiety evinced that the Government should take a firm, bold line. This delay—this uncertainty, by which, abroad, we are losing our prestige and our position, while Russia is advancing and will be before Constantinople in no time! Then the Government will be fearfully blamed and the Queen so humiliated that she thinks she would abdicate at once. Be bold! Why not call your followers together, of the House of Commons as well as of the House of Lords; tell them that the interests of Great Britain are at stake; that it is not for the Christians (and they are quite as cruel as the Turks) but for conquest that this cruel, wicked war is waged, that Russia is as barbarous and tyrannical as the Turks! Tell them this, and that they should rally round their Sovereign and country—and you will have a large and powerful majority. And only say Russia *shall not* go farther and she will stop. But if this be not done

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and done quickly it will soon be too late; and we shall then have to do much more than we shall have to do now.

The Queen was so alarmed and horrified at Lord Derby's language last night, and at poor Lady Derby's distress at his not doing what he ought, that she could hardly rest. The Prince of Wales was frantic about it, Prince Leopold equally so, and everyone puts the blame on the 3 Lords—Derby, Salisbury, and Carnarvon. The Opposition will be the first to turn round on you, if you don't at last act, and delay of weeks or days only may be—mark the Queen's words—fatal!

Pray act quickly! The Austrian note is fair enough, but also weak and procrastinating.

Could Lord Beaconsfield not summon Lord Lyons over to say what the feeling in France is, and then confidentially ascertain whether he could not, in case Lord Derby resigns (and really his views and language make him a danger to the country)—you could reckon sure on him as a successor [*sic*]! Lord Derby praises him and Mr. Layard to the skies—but goes on as if they wrote nothing! The Queen's anxiety from her knowledge of the past and of foreign Governments is unbounded.

To Queen Victoria.

Confidential and secret. 2, WHITEHALL G'DNS, *June* 28, '77. —Lord Beaconsfield . . . has had the honor of receiving your Majesty's letter of yesterday. Sympathising entirely with all your Majesty's feelings in the present critical state of affairs, it is his duty to lay before your Majesty two important facts: 1. It is impossible to obtain a vote of money and men, until the War Estimates are passed, that is to say, so long as we may remain in a state of neutrality. 2. If we had men and money, we could not despatch them to any part of the Turkish Empire without the permission of the Porte, and the Porte will not grant that permission, unless we occupy the Dardanelles, or otherwise, as their avowed allies. All these difficulties would be removed, if we declared war against Russia: but there are not three men in the Cabinet, who are prepared to advise that step.

Lord Beaconsfield has placed the Army Estimates again first on the paper to-morrow, and if we succeed in passing them, he will make proposals to the Cabinet on Saturday.

In the meantime, he is working privately at Constantinople and with Count Bismarck, with the view of inducing the Porte to request the occupation of the Dardanelles by England as a material guarantee, and of prevailing on Count Bismarck, in some way, to co-operate with that step.

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The progress of the war strengthened Beaconsfield against his dissentient colleagues. Though the Russians made no great headway in their attack on Armenia, their invasion of the Balkans proceeded without pause. The Danube was crossed before the end of June; on July 7 Tirnova, the chief city of the northern Bulgarian province, was captured; and in the middle of the month the Russian General Gurko seized two passes in the Balkans, and his light troops began to raid the Thracian valley of the Maritza, the Bulgarians in his train exacting a bloody vengeance from their Turkish persecutors. An advance to Constantinople became at once an immediate possibility of the war; and the Cabinet, fortified by representations to the same effect by Austria, took steps to make Russia aware of the seriousness with which they would regard any occupation of the imperial city. As Layard had advised prompt application to the Sultan for permission to the British to occupy the Gallipoli peninsula in arms, the decision of the Cabinet fell short of what the Prime Minister desired, and very far short indeed of what the Queen regarded as the imperative necessities of the situation. Her Majesty's feverish anxiety added much to her Prime Minister's labours. 'The Faery writes every day, and telegraphs every hour; this is almost literally the case,' he told Lady Bradford in June.

To Queen Victoria.

2, WHITEHALL G'DNS, *July* 12, '77.—Lord Beaconsfield with his humble duty to your Majesty. The important Cabinet is over, and the Lord Chancellor will have the honor of communicating in detail its general conclusions, and submit them to your Majesty's pleasure. Subject to that, we have decided to address a note, of a very formal and authoritative character, to Russia in the vein sketched in a previous letter of Lord Beaconsfield to your Majesty. Anxious, sincerely anxious, to meet the Russian views in other matters, the occupation of Constantinople, or attempt to occupy it, will be looked upon as an incident, which frees us from all previous engagements, and must lead to serious consequences.

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The phrase *casus belli* is not used, but reserved for a subsequent occasion, if necessary. The Secretary of State for War, and the (*pro tem.*) First Lord of the Admiralty, are to examine Admiral Commerell and others on the approaches of Constantinople, and the Cabinet will, at its next meeting, decide the question whether the appearance of your Majesty's fleet at Constantinople will be sufficient to effect our object. . . .

July 16.—Lord Beaconsfield . . . deeply regrets the distress which your Majesty experiences, and so naturally experiences, in the present critical state of affairs: but he trusts, on reflection, that distress may be softened, if not altogether removed; and he believes that the vessel of the State, tho' no doubt there will be perils and vicissitudes, may be steered into a haven, safe and satisfactory.

And, in the first place, with regard to the Russian outrages and 'atrocities.' He has not neglected the subject, especially since your Majesty has so repeatedly, and so forcibly, called his attention to it. He is, at present, in communication with a member of Parliament, who has a position, and speaks well, to bring the subject before the House of Commons by enquiries, and, subsequently, by a motion on going into Committee of Supply, and he, some days ago, took active measures, that the transactions in question should be placed before the public eye and feeling by the Press. With regard to diplomatic interposition by your Majesty's Government, there is an important difference between the instances of 'Turkish atrocities' and the Russian outrages. The Turkish atrocities were investigated by a judicial tribunal, by which many of the chief delinquents were found guilty—yet no punishments were inflicted. There was a clear miscarriage of justice, and a firm ground on which your Majesty could rest your indignant remonstrance. That is not yet the case in the Russian instance, and if we make a protest founded on hearsay and anonymous communications, we should only leave ourselves open to the cynical criticism, and the impertinent incredulity, of Prince Gortchakoff.

And now with respect to the still more important question of the occupation of Constantinople. Lord Beaconsfield experiences great difficulty in appearing to comment on your Majesty's remarks on this matter, because he entirely agrees with your Majesty in your Majesty's views and sentiments upon it, and should, long ago, have asked permission to retire from the difficult and not very agreeable office of attempting to guide a discordant and unwilling Cabinet on the most important conjuncture in the politics of this half-century, had he not been restrained by the conviction, that it was his duty to stand by your Majesty as long as there

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was a chance of your Majesty's policy being accomplished. And he was quite prepared, on Saturday late, to have advised your Majesty to accept the resignations of Lord Salisbury and Lord Derby, had they alone been the obstacles: but when he found the Lord Chancellor, hitherto his right arm in affairs, followed by the Duke of Richmond, and every other member of the Cabinet except Lord John Manners and Sir Michael Beach, shrink from the last resort, he felt it best (waiting to the very end before he spoke) to bring about the arrangement ultimately agreed to—which was still a step in advance, and which may lead to all that is required. The Cabinet agreed to make something like an ultimatum notice to Russia; Lord Derby went so far as to say, that, whatever others might feel, he had no objection to be the ally of Turkey, provided that alliance was for English interests: and even Lord Salisbury declared, that he had no objection to the English fleet going to Constantinople, if such a move would prevent the Russian invasion. To-morrow, the Cabinet meets early, and it will have to consider the report of the naval authorities as to the efficiency of the fleet to prevent occupation. Lord Beaconsfield believes that, alone, the fleet would not be sufficient. On all these matters, Lord Beaconsfield proposes to confer with your Majesty after the Cabinet—to-morrow at Windsor, at 3 o'clock, unless commanded otherwise.

There is one point which Lord Beaconsfield would humbly place before your Majesty. Lord Beaconsfield ventures to remark, that he has never at any time, represented to your Majesty, that, if the present state of neutrality were maintained, your Majesty could prevent the Russians from occupying Constantinople. That would require war with Russia, a force of 60 to 80,000 men at Constantinople, and the British fleet. What he always recommended was, that the Dardanelles should be occupied, while still professing neutrality, and held as a material guarantee for the obligations and respect of treaties. This would not have prevented the occupation of Constantinople were the Russians strong enough to effect it, but it would have given us a commanding position at the time of negotiations for peace, which would have ensured the restoration of Constantinople by the Russians and maintained untouched England's present position in the Mediterranean.

From Queen Victoria.

WINDSOR CASTLE, *July* 16, '77.—The Queen has only time to thank Lord Beaconsfield for his kind long letter, and she must say—and she does not care if he repeats it—that she is shocked and bitterly disappointed at the conduct of the

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Chancellor, the Duke of Richmond, and others! We ought to have acted when Lord Beaconsfield originally proposed it, long ago, and those who opposed it will bitterly rue it some day. However, that is now no longer the question, but, What can be done, as a material guarantee and as an assertion of our position, if Russia goes on as she does? The crossing of the Balkans makes a great difference, and nothing should prevent our sending the fleet to Constantinople, and being prepared for action, for we shall have to act. These are very important points. Lord Derby, to whom the Queen has also telegraphed about the cruelties answers that he will, at once, speak to Count Schouvaloff. For the protection of the Christians at Constantinople the fleet would seem necessary. . . .

OSBORNE, *July* 20.—To-day's telegram from Mr. Layard is very alarming. What the Queen fears is an outburst of (just) indignation at Constantinople, in which all Christians will suffer and our last hold on our poor Allies whom we (to the Queen's feeling) so cruelly abandon to a shameful and detestable enemy and invader! She is distressed too not to see anything acted upon which Lord Beaconsfield tells her is to be done. He told her on Tuesday that in 3 days 5,000 men could be sent to increase the garrisons, and that every effort should be made to be prepared, even for Gallipoli if the Russians did not make a dash at Constantinople. But she hears of no troops moving or going, and becomes more and more alarmed. The Queen always feels hopeful and encouraged when she has seen Lord Beaconsfield, but somehow or other, whether intentionally or thro' want of energy on the part of those under him or at the offices, nothing material is done!! It alarms her seriously.

For fear of any mistake she wishes to recapitulate what he said in answer to her serious question, 'What are we to do, and how are we to assert our position if the Russians succeed in getting to Constantinople?' The Queen understood Lord Beaconsfield to answer: 'If I am your Majesty's Minister I am prepared to say to Russia that if the Russians do not quit Constantinople at a given day, which I would name, I will declare war.' And Lord Beaconsfield added that Lord Salisbury on his (Ld. B.'s) putting the same question had himself said, 'Declare war.' Is this correct? The Queen hopes that there will be an opportunity for Lord Beaconsfield soon to state strongly in Parliament that the Government will never stand anything which would injure the interests and lower the honour and dignity of this country.

How can Lord Granville hold such equivocal language? He who was cheated about Khiva, how can he speak as he

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does? And the language—the insulting language—used by the Russians against us! It makes the Queen's blood boil! What has become of the feeling of many in this country?

The Queen rejoices to hear how completely the unjust attack on Lord Beaconsfield about Mr. Pigott's[1] appointment has been refuted. But she is sorry for the annoyance it must have caused him. . . .

The Queen most earnestly urges on Lord Beaconsfield to hold very strong language to the Cabinet to-morrow and to insist on the speedy despatch of the troops to increase the garrisons, as speedily as possible.

Beaconsfield took care that the serious representation to Russia should be seen to be no mere empty threat; and he succeeded in carrying his Cabinet with him in further measures of precaution.

To Queen Victoria.

(*Telegram in cypher.*) *July* 21, 1877, 2.30 *p.m.*—The Cabinet has agreed unanimously, if Russia occupies Constantinople, and does not arrange for her immediate retirement from it, to advise your Majesty to declare war against that Power. Orders have been given to strengthen the Mediterranean garrisons.

To Queen Victoria.

2, WHITEHALL G'DNS, *July* 22, '77.—Lord Beaconsfield . . . deeply regrets that your Majesty should suppose for a moment, that he makes any representations to your Majesty which he does not sincerely intend to effect: even with the short-sighted view of sparing your Majesty anxiety, [that] would be, in his mind, dishonorable conduct, and almost amount to treason. He errs, perhaps, in being too communicative to your Majesty, in often imparting to your Majesty plans which are in embryo, and which, even if apparently matured, occasionally encounter unforeseen difficulties: but it relieves his mind, and often assists his judgment, to converse, and confer, with your Majesty without the slightest reserve, and this necessarily leads to your Majesty sometimes assuming that steps will be taken, which are necessarily delayed, and sometimes even relinquished.

The opposition to the increase of the Mediterranean garrisons, and the procrastination, have entirely arisen from the

[1] See below, pp. 163–168.

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military authorities, that is to say, the 'Confidential Committee' of General Officers, who would be as powerful as the Council of Ten, and outvote always the Doges. It is they who have opposed every military move, that has been suggested from the beginning—Mediterranean garrisons, expeditions to Gallipoli, and so on. What they want, and what they have ever tried to bring about, is a great military expedition, like the Crimean; but such a step would be utterly inconsistent with the policy of neutrality adopted by the Cabinet, and cannot be countenanced unless there is an avowed and public change of that policy.

Yesterday, the Cabinet in a decided manner declared, that they would receive no further protests from the 'Confidential Committee,' and ordered steps to be taken immediately for strengthening the Malta garrison by 3,000 men, and will follow this up, according to circumstances. So great is the influence of the 'Confidential Committee,' that the Secretary of War, who had been in favor of the measure, advised the Cabinet not to adopt it, and ultimately agreed only with a protest.

Yesterday, also, in the most formal, and even solemn, manner, the question was placed before the Cabinet, What they were prepared to do, if Russia occupied Constantinople? They unanimously agreed, no one stronger and more decided than Lord Salisbury, that the Cabinet should advise your Majesty to declare war against Russia.

It is Lord Beaconsfield's present opinion, that in such a case Russia must be attacked from Asia, that troops should be sent to the Persian Gulf, and that the Empress of India should order her armies to clear Central Asia of the Muscovites, and drive them into the Caspian. We have a good instrument for this purpose in Lord Lytton, and indeed he was placed there with that view.

Lord Salisbury will attend your Majesty on Wednesday, and Lord Beaconsfield purposes soon, perhaps on the Saturday following, to have the honor, and great delight, of seeing your Majesty. He continues pretty well, but has been, and still is, a little harassed by this impertinent nonsense about Mr. Pigott. These affairs take up precious time, and, if the time is not given, the most unfounded calumnies get afloat.

Strangely enough, at this point Beaconsfield was faced with the threat of secession, not by his anti-Turkish colleagues, but by the most stalwart representative in the Cabinet of the Palmerstonian pro-Turkish tradition.

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To Lord John Manners.

2, WHITEHALL G'DNS, *July* 24, '77.—Your letter is a great blow to me, and most unexpected. I really don't exactly understand what decision of the Cabinet you refer to.

I must beg you, at all events, to keep your resignation secret, until I can communicate it to the Queen personally, as a written announcement would lead to much excitement. Her Majesty, of all my colleagues, most depended on your supporting me, and now, when, for the first time, her Cabinet has unanimously and heartily agreed to declare war against Russia, if she evinces the slightest intention to fortify, or remain in, Constantinople (if she ever get there), the Queen will be greatly distressed and surprised at your determination.

I most earnestly request, therefore, that all may be suspended until I see Her Majesty, which I will try to effect on Saturday next.

What Manners objected to was the apparent abandonment to Russia of Batoum, the great seaport on the south-east coast of the Black Sea. But of course the Cabinet were concentrating on the vital point of Constantinople and the Straits, leaving minor matters for subsequent consideration, according to the progress of the war; and Beaconsfield was able to persuade his old comrade-in-arms to withdraw his resignation. No sooner was this difficulty settled than Beaconsfield had to act once more as lightning-conductor between the Queen and Derby, with whose conduct of foreign affairs Her Majesty became daily more utterly dissatisfied. With Salisbury, on the other hand, who was invited at this period to Osborne, the Queen was much better pleased. She wrote to Beaconsfield on July 25 of the Indian Secretary's 'sound views.' 'He is deeply impressed with the extreme importance of our being completely prepared for eventualities which may shortly arise.'

From Queen Victoria.

OSBORNE, *July* 26, '77.—The Queen saw with pleasure last night the emphatic denial of Lord Derby and Count Beust to the extraordinary and very alarming assertion made to the latter and reported—of our not objecting to the

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temporary occupation by the Russians of Constantinople. But she is bound to say in confidence to Lord Beaconsfield that the language of Lord Derby to Count Beust as described in the draft of July 21 to Sir A. Buchanan is of a very doubtful nature on the subject; and when the Queen read it just after seeing the alarming telegram she felt very painfully impressed with the conviction (which Lord Salisbury she found shared) that Lord D. did not truly and properly carry out the decisions of the Cabinet, and still more did not conduct foreign affairs as they ought—for the Cabinet must do that. The time is come when our policy must be clear and decided. Always—as Sir S. Northcote and Lord Derby do—explaining away every act which is intended to show Russia and Europe that we are not passive spectators of the former's shameful aggressive conduct—is disastrous, and injures the Government in the eyes of the country and makes us contemptible in the eyes of Europe. . . .

To Queen Victoria.

(*Telegram.*) WHITEHALL G'DNS, *July* 26, '77.—There was a Cabinet this morning to consider the question. We have decided on two resolutions, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer has sent them to Lord Hartington, who wishes to act in concert with your Majesty's Government.

From Queen Victoria.

(*Telegram in cypher.*) OSBORNE, *July* 28, '77.—Greatly alarmed at Mr. Layard's appeal, which can no longer be disregarded if British interests are not to suffer most seriously. A decided answer must be given, Gallipoli must be occupied. You will be fearfully blamed if you let Constantinople be taken, and without declaring to Russia what the consequences will be. If there is a horrible massacre of the Christians we shall be held responsible for it. You should bring this at once before the Cabinet.

The Queen sent an identical message to Derby, and received a reply whose studied calm only added fuel to her indignation.

Lord Derby to Queen Victoria.

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July* 28, '77.—Lord Derby, with his humble duty, submits that he has been honored by your Majesty's telegram received to-day. The subject of it has been discussed in Cabinet, but the telegram did not arrive

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till after the Cabinet was over. Lord Beaconsfield will have given your Majesty the fullest details as to what has passed. Lord Derby cyphered that it would be too late to occupy Gallipoli, even if that step were desirable. Lord Derby is quite aware that there will be an outcry, indeed there is one already—from the party which does not conceal its wish for war with Russia. But he believes that party to be small in numbers, though loud and active. He is quite satisfied that the great bulk of the nation desires nothing so much, in connection with this question, as the maintenance of peace. If they have not spoken out, it is, in his belief, because the declarations of the Ministry have satisfied them that there is no danger of its being disturbed.

Beaconsfield was at Osborne for a week-end visit when Derby's letter to the Queen arrived. Her Majesty immediately submitted it to him.

To Queen Victoria.

OSBORNE, *July* 29, '77.—Lord Beaconsfield with his humble duty to your Majesty. This is a mere *boutade* of [Lord Derby's] bad temper at being obliged by the Cabinet to send the telegram to Mr. Layard.[1] It is quite intolerable, and is as much addressed to your Majesty's humble Minister as to your Majesty. Your Majesty will not deign to notice it, Lord Beaconsfield feels quite sure. Lord Beaconsfield hopes, that the great objects of your Majesty's imperial policy may be secured without going to war: but if war is necessary he will not shrink from advising your Majesty to declare it, and, in that case, he very much doubts whether Lord Derby, with all his savage and sullen expressions, will resign.

But the Queen's indignation was too great to suffer her to adopt her Minister's advice and take no notice; and ultimately he consented to draft a reply for her which she described as 'admirable,' and which she forwarded without alteration.

Queen Victoria to Lord Derby.

OSBORNE, *July* 29, 1877.—The Queen regrets to hear from Lord Derby, that it is now too late to undertake the Gallipoli expedition. It is much to be deplored, that it was not under-

[1] See below, pp. 160, 161.

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taken at the time when it was proposed by the Prime Minister, and entirely approved and supported by the Queen. There seems a general concurrence in all parties, now, in its favour, and it is not improbable that it would have prevented this horrible war. The Queen does not know from what sources Lord Derby gathers his opinion, that the British people are in favour of Russian supremacy. She is convinced of the contrary, and believes there will soon be no controversy on the subject.

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CHAPTER V.

CONDITIONAL NEUTRALITY.

1877.

The tension of Queen and Ministers was greatly relieved at the close of July by the serious and unexpected check which the Russians suffered before Plevna—a great centre of roads on the right flank of their advance. It soon became evident that there was no longer any immediate prospect of a Russian occupation of Constantinople—the danger which had dominated the counsels of Ministers for many months. Beaconsfield was able to give some attention to the troubles of his former theatre of fame, the House of Commons, where Parnell and his small following had taken advantage of the great leader's withdrawal to organise a most formidable course of systematic obstruction.

To Queen Victoria.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *Aug.* 1, 1877.—. . . With reference to an observation in your Majesty's cyphered telegram of this morn., Lord Beaconsfield would ask leave to remark, that the telegram in question was sent to Mr. Layard, not to the Sultan; and that, in due time, it will have to be printed and presented to the House of Commons, and that great care must be taken, lest we be accused of changing our policy without due public notice. The state of neutrality, which has been adopted, renders the conduct of affairs extremely delicate, and difficult. Lord Beaconsfield, however, has much confidence in the secret telegram, which he forwarded to Mr. Layard from Osborne last Sunday.[1]

If the battle, described in the second edition of the *Telegraph*

[1] This telegram from Beaconsfield to Layard ran as follows: 'Osborne, July 29. *Personal and most confidential.* The telegram sent you yesterday from the Cabinet opens a prospect of recurring to the wise and ancient policy of England. The British Fleet in the Turkish waters with the

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of this day, has really taken place, and with the results described, the position of the Russian armies, both north and south of the Balkans, will be perilous—24,000 Russians *hors de combat!* So far as the opinion of the Porte is concerned, a telegram from Mr. Layard would seem to confirm this 'wondrous tale.' There is a Cabinet to-morrow at two o'ck., after which Lord Beaconsfield will communicate to your Majesty. . . .

Almost as great an affair as the battle in Bulgaria is the signal triumph of Constitutional principles and Parliamentary practice in the House of Commons this day. A session of 26 unbroken hours! There is nothing like it on record. It was the triumph of British pluck and British gentlemen, and will have a great effect on the conduct of public affairs.

Lord Beaconsfield made a visit to the House of Commons this morning. It was the first time he had been able to visit it since he left it, after having sate in it for nearly forty years, and having been its leader—one side or the other—for nearly a quarter of a century. The House gave him a cheer when he appeared in the gallery, and the cheer commenced on the Liberal benches, which first observed him.

This is one of the comparatively rare references in the Beaconsfield correspondence of this period to domestic politics. From the summer of 1876 to that of 1878 the Eastern Question was, for him, the Aaron's rod which swallowed all minor, and particularly all domestic, interests—sometimes with unfortunate results. One of the sanitary measures of this Government of Social Reform was a much-needed Bill, introduced in the Lords in 1877, for consolidating the Burials Acts and providing additional cemeteries. Here, it seemed to the Queen and to Archbishop Tait, was an opportunity for a settlement of the vexed question of Dissenters' burials, and Beaconsfield was not indisposed to move in that direction.

To Queen Victoria.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *Feb.* 20, 1877.—Lord Beaconsfield with his humble duty to your Majesty.

consent of the Sultan may be the first step in the virtual preservation of his Empire. I much depend upon your energy and skill, in both of which I have the utmost confidence.' But the Sultan was still suspicious of British intentions, and, as the threat to Constantinople was no longer immediate, it was not until the following February that the Fleet entered the Sea of Marmora.

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The Burials Bill, to be introduced into the House of Lords, is only a Consolidation Bill, simplifying in one Bill the various Acts on the subject of Burials.

There has been an attempt to introduce a few original clauses, which it was thought might facilitate the resistance to Mr. Morgan's 'Burials Bill' in the House of Commons. They will not satisfy the Dissenters, but may perhaps aid a little our Borough Members, as giving an excuse for opposing him.

But the clauses are not yet drawn, and hang fire, so it is impossible to send them to your Majesty.

The clergy are quite inexorable on the subject: 'all schools of Church thought.'

In the meantime, the Sacerdotalists are moving every influence, divine or much the reverse, against your Majesty's Ministers. . . .

But the resistance of the clergy to change was strongly reflected in the attitude of churchmen in the Cabinet. Accordingly, the additional clauses went no further than to permit silent burials of Dissenters in consecrated ground; and even this concession was withdrawn by the Government after the second reading had been secured. The Archbishop was indignant, and many lay churchmen in the House of Lords shared his feelings. Lord Harrowby, whose son, Lord Sandon, was himself a Minister, gave notice of an amendment in Committee permitting, not merely silent burials, but Nonconformist services by the open grave. Beaconsfield realised that the time had come to evacuate a position which could not be much longer held. On Saturday, May 12, the Archbishop called on him, and records in his diary that the Prime Minister was 'quite in accord with me, and as acute as possible respecting the best way of proceeding. "The question ought to be settled." Agreed to bring it before the Cabinet.' But on the following Monday Beaconsfield had to confess to the Archbishop that 'he could not manage the Cabinet, but he hoped I would persevere in the course I had sketched out.' Harrowby moved his amendment on the Thursday, and with the Archbishop's help reduced the Government, despite their

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assiduous whipping, to a tie. 'It was somewhat absurd,' writes the Archbishop, 'to be dividing the House against them, knowing that their chief was all the time on my side. . . . It was amusing to see him sitting quietly throughout the debate, without saying a word, and voting with his colleagues, while hoping they would be beaten.' On Report Harrowby absolutely carried his amendment by a majority of sixteen, and the Government abandoned the Bill.[1] Beaconsfield's acquiescence in this somewhat humiliating procedure was undoubtedly due to his determination not to lose from his Cabinet one of his most stalwart and capable supporters in Eastern questions. Other churchmen among his colleagues might be disposed to compromise on this church question; but Hardy, the representative of the Oxford clergy, made it clear that, if Harrowby's amendment were accepted by the Government, he would resign.[2] This was a loss which, in view of the dubious attitude, in regard to Russia and Turkey, of Derby, Salisbury, and Carnarvon, Beaconsfield was not prepared to face. He preferred to risk the inconveniences and dangers of postponing the settlement of the burials question. It is difficult to maintain that he was wrong.

There was, during this session of 1877, one striking episode, which, after apparently threatening a serious blow to Beaconsfield's reputation, proved in the end to be the means of confirming and consolidating it. A vacancy had arisen in the office of Comptroller, or permanent head, of the Stationery Office. It was a post which had been held by literary men of some distinction, such as McCulloch, the economist, and W. R. Greg, the essayist and reviewer; but a Select Committee of the House of Commons had condemned the waste and mismanagement of the department, and had recommended that its head should in future be a man 'practically as well acquainted with the trade as if he were a stationer.'

[1] See *Life of Archbishop Tait*, ch. 29.
[2] See Gathorne Hardy, Vol. II., p. 23.

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Beaconsfield disregarded this recommendation and appointed Thomas Digby Pigott,[1] a clerk in the War Office of eighteen years' standing. The transaction was brought before the House of Commons on July 16, and denounced by the Opposition free lances as a 'job.' On what ground, they asked, was the report of the Committee ignored, and this important post of £1,500 a year conferred upon a man who was 'one of a hundred and one junior clerks in the War Office, being 69th on the list?' Was it because Mr. Pigott's father had been vicar of Hughenden, and, with his family, had rendered valuable assistance to Disraeli in his electoral contests in Bucks? Such was the insinuation; and it had a very plausible air. The Prime Minister could no longer appear in that House to answer for himself; his colleagues, imperfectly informed, gave only the usual official reply that their chief had duly considered public interests in making the appointment. This was not convincing to the House at large; Knightley, now almost the solitary unconverted member of the anti-Disraeli Tory clique,[2] aired his virtue by speaking and dividing against the Government; the Whips were caught napping; and what amounted to a personal vote of censure upon Beaconsfield was carried by four votes. The press and public ratified the censure; *The Times* describing the appointment as 'too splendidly audacious.'

And yet the whole affair was, to use the title under which those of the Beaconsfield papers which concern it were docketed, a 'great mare's nest.' Three days later (July 19) Beaconsfield rose in the House of Lords to defend his action. The speech, besides being a complete vindication, was a masterpiece of stage effect. 'Never shall I forget,' writes Redesdale,[3] who was present, 'the air of dejection, the hang-dog look, with which he entered the House. His head was bent, his gait uncertain, and he sat down wearily' on the front bench. It was amid

[1] Now Sir Digby Pigott.
[2] See Vol. V., pp. 203, 204.
[3] *Memories*, ch. 35.

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chilling silence that he began to narrate the reasons which had actuated him in the appointment. The recommendations of the Select Committee, he explained, had been by no means disregarded by the Government. Many had been adopted; but the suggestion that the head of the stationery department should have technical knowledge appeared to him, on consideration, to be impracticable, as no one connected with great commercial transactions would be tempted to accept a post, the salary of which hardly exceeded that of the manager of a first-class establishment. To carry out the recommendation, 'I should have had to appoint some person who had retired from business, or some person from whom business had retired.' What was wanted for the discharge of the duties of Comptroller was not technical knowledge, which could be supplied by subordinates in the office, but administrative ability, official experience, and capacity for labour, together with the educational, moral, and social qualities necessary for presiding over a great public department. Accordingly he had decided to give the post to a young member of the Civil Service as a reward for merit and industry. Mr. Pigott was no 'mere War Office clerk'; he had served as private secretary to various Secretaries of State, and he had especially distinguished himself as secretary to more than one Commission. He had now, owing to the vote of the Commons, resigned; but to accept his resignation would be to leave an able and deserving Civil Servant to absolute destitution. Beaconsfield therefore hoped that the House of Commons would yet reconsider the case in a milder and juster spirit.

So far Beaconsfield had preserved the subdued and deprecatory air with which he began his speech. But, having justified the appointment on public grounds, he now turned with brightening face and more confident tones to the personal attack on himself. 'My lords,' he continued, 'it has been said, in an assembly almost as classical as that which I am addressing, that the

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appointment was a job.' 'A job!' writes Sir Henry Lucy,[1] who watched the scene from the gallery; 'it was worth being crushed and crowded and hustled to hear Beaconsfield simply pronounce those two words. His indignant shoulders went upwards in dumb appeal to his sympathising ears. His still plump hands were held out, palm upwards, that noble lords might see how clean they were. His eyes were widened to their utmost capacity, in astonishment at the supposition that he might be thought capable of this thing charged against him, whilst his cheeks puffed out to emit, in an almost horrifying whisper, the fearsome words, "a job!"' It had been said, Beaconsfield proceeded,

that the father of Mr. Pigott was the parson of my parish, that I had relations of long and intimate friendship with him, that he busied himself in county elections, and that in my earlier contests in the county with which I am connected I was indebted to his exertions. My Lords, this is really a romance. Thirty years ago there was a vicar of my parish of the name of Pigott, and he certainly was father to this gentleman. He did not owe his preferment to me, nor was he ever under any obligation to me. Shortly after I succeeded to the property Mr. Pigott gave up his living and retired to a distant county. I have never had any relations with him. With regard to our intimate friendship and his electioneering assistance, all I know of his interference in county elections is that before he departed from the county of Buckingham he registered his vote against me. And, my Lords, it is the truth—it may surprise you, but it is the truth—that I have no personal acquaintance with his son, Mr. Digby Pigott, who was appointed to this office the other day. I do not know him even by sight.

As Beaconsfield pronounced these last sentences he drew himself up to his full height, and his assured and triumphant tones 'galvanised' the House of Lords 'into something like life.' The general cheers and laughter which greeted the conclusion of his speech showed that he had won his cause with his audience; and, adds Redesdale, 'the Lord Beaconsfield who walked out of

[1] *Diary of the Disraeli Parliament*, ch. 21.

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the House that evening with a firm step was twenty years younger than the poor old man, broken down with care and the weight of years, who had shuffled into it so feebly an hour earlier.' Redesdale dwells on the histrionic success of the performance, but the attentive reader of this biography will realise that in these latter years, save when under the stimulus of direct political excitement, Beaconsfield was never far from the border of physical collapse. The public and the press, even the Liberal press, followed the Lords in accepting the defence as complete, and the next week the Commons rescinded their censure without a division, Hartington, the Opposition leader, and the irreconcilable Knightley joining in the generous apologies offered to the Prime Minister.

To Lady Bradford.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *July* 20.—. . . There has been a meeting of the Speaker, the Cr. of the Exchequer, and Hartington, and they have come to an unanimous conclusion, that steps must be immediately taken to rescind the resolution of the Ho. of Commons. It takes a great deal to elate me, but I confess I am not insensible to such a triumph!

It may be added that the suggestion that Beaconsfield had any special obligation to, or tenderness for, the Pigott family was absurd. The Rev. J. Pigott was only his vicar for three years, from 1848 to 1851, when he accepted a living in Norfolk; and in this short time the relations between squire and parson were not unfrequently strained. One instance has been mentioned in Vol. III., ch. 6, when the vicar took upon himself to reprove the squire for Sunday travelling; another concerned a question of right of way. The vicar appears to have been a Whig, and if he travelled from his Norfolk living to vote for Bucks in 1852 (which, in spite of Beaconsfield's confident assertion, seems uncertain) would naturally have supported the Whig candidate, Cavendish. Mr. Digby Pigott's principal work for the State had been as secretary to the important Commission on Army

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promotion, which had recently reported. For this he had been publicly thanked by Gathorne Hardy, the Secretary of State, and had been warmly recommended for promotion by the Chairman of the Commission, Disraeli's old colleague, Pakington, now Lord Hampton. Few statesmen were more vitally interested in securing a competent head for the Stationery Office than Beaconsfield, who had made frequent complaint of official pens, ink and paper; and it is satisfactory to know that his new Comptroller justified the confidence placed in him, and sensibly improved the methods of his office.

Beaconsfield's private correspondence shows that, though his sufferings during this spring and summer were great, he managed in the intervals of his attacks to make occasional appearances in society. He seems to have felt that, as his chest complaint rendered him, in his words to Lady Chesterfield, 'quite incapable of addressing a public assembly,' it was incumbent on him to make it clear to the world that an almost absolute silence in the House of Lords was compatible with a vitality which could dominate the Cabinet at a period of crisis.

To Anne Lady Chesterfield.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *June* 22.—. . . My colossal American dinner—forty guests, all men, except the hostess and Mrs. Grant: the room full of flowers and strong perfumes, which, afterwards mixing with the fumes of tobacco, did not at all benefit my bronchial tubes, wh. are not in very good order.

I sate next to the General,[1] more honorable than pleasant. I felt so overcome that I escaped as soon as possible, and did not go to Grosvenor House, where I might have seen S., whom I never see. . . .

To Lady Bradford.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *Sunday, July* 1, 1877.—. . . Gull is all froth and words: what you heard, he also said to me,

[1] Ex-President Grant was then on a visit to Europe. Beaconsfield, at Derby's suggestion, asked Grant to his official banquet on the Queen's birthday, but the visitor was engaged.

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but yesterday he was evidently perplexed and disappointed, and came twice.

They are all alike. First of all, they throw it on the weather: then there must be change of scene: so Sir W. Jenner, after blundering and plundering in the usual way, sent me to Bournemouth, and Gull wants to send me to Ems. I shd. like to send both of them to Jericho. . . .

I shall be very disappointed if Monty sees your dear orange-tinted eyes and I am not to have that pleasure.

The only good thing in all these troubles is that I am to drink port wine. After 3 years of plebeian tipples, this amuses me. . . .

To Anne Lady Chesterfield.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *July* 14, 1877.—. . . It is raining cats and dogs, wh. it fortunately did not do on Thursday, when there was a garden party at Marlboro' House. I was there for a moment, having been to a wedding, and then to a wedding festival—hard work; but it is, sometimes, necessary to show oneself, or else the *Daily News* says I am dead, or dying, wh. is the same. I am pretty well, but shd. be glad to hear that you were better.

Garden parties in London are wells; full of dank air. Sir W. Gull tells me that if the great garden parties in future are held at Buckingham and Marlboro' House instead of Chiswick and so on, his practice will be doubled.

Afterwards on Thursday, I dined with the Duke of ——. I like to go, as a rule, to a house for the first time. I rarely go a second. I shall not dine with the Duke of —— again. The Duchess, attractive at the first glance, is not so when you sit next to her; an ordinary mind and a squalling voice. The claret, wh. Sir Gull [*sic*] orders me to drink, was poison. When I dine out now, I am at the mercy of these criminal landlords. They shd. be punished like Signora Tofana and the Marchioness of Brinvilliers. An Englishman, incapable otherwise of a shabby action, will nevertheless order inferior claret at dinner, wh. is the only time at which a real gentleman drinks wine. At Lord Northbrook's last Tuesday, the table claret was of the highest class, but then he is a Baring, and the sons of princely merchants look upon bad wine as a damnable heresy. The P. and Pss. of Wales dined there, but did not arrive until ¼ past 9!!! Too soon for supper, too late for the sublimer meal. . . .

To Lady Bradford.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *July* 26.—. . . 'Gussie' has asked me to dine there on Sunday—to meet you. It is

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exactly four years ago—the Sunday before Goodwood—that I met you dining at that very house. I shd. like much to have celebrated that anniversary, tho' anniversaries are not much to my taste. . . .

July 28.—Not a moment—and yet it is a farewell! How terrible it shd. be so perfunctory. I think of other ones—and sigh. . . .

Four years ago! It makes one very sad. I gave you feelings you could not return. It was not your fault: my fate and my misfortune.

I leave a dismayed Cabinet to encounter a stormy Court; but have faith in my star.

OSBORNE, *July* 29.—. . . Yesterday, almost the moment I arrived, I had to plant a tree—a pinsapo. P. Leopold had to attend at the ceremony. He is clever. . . . Monty takes to him very much. Monty had the honor of dining with the Queen—a strictly family circle. I sate next to Pss. Beatrice. They were all full of my visit to Zazel, whom the Pss. Beatrice had been promised she was to see. 'You also,' sd. the Queen, 'paid a visit to somebody else, the Gorilla.' 'Yes, Madam, there were three sights; Zazel, Pongo, and myself.' And then I told her how we moved about as if in a fair.

To Mrs. de Burgh.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *Aug.* 16, '77.—I am grieved I did not see you before you left town—but I have been very ill, and continue very ill, and am really quite incapable of walking upstairs—gout and bronchitis have ended in asthma, the horrors of wh. I have never contemplated or conceived. I have seen more than one person die, but I don't think they suffered the oppression and despair, wh. I have sometimes to encounter—and, sometimes, I am obliged to sit up all night, and want of sleep at last breaks me down.

Nothing but the critical state of affairs has kept me at my post, but if I die at it, I cannot desert it now. I have managed to attend every Cabinet, but I can't walk at present from Whitehall to Downing St., but am obliged to brougham even that step, wh. I once could have repeated fifty times a day. . . .

Beaconsfield had very wisely deprecated and evaded discussions in Parliament about the possibilities of future policy in the Near East. But, before separating for the recess the Cabinet had a general talk about the situation—a talk which shows how Beaconsfield's policy was gaining ground with his colleagues.

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To Queen Victoria.

2, WHITEHALL G'D'NS, *Aug.* 10, '77.—Lord Beaconsfield with his humble duty to your Majesty. Assuming that affairs will not now be concluded in one campaign, and that, consequently, our policy has become more precise and decided, and that we cannot consent even to an occupation of Constantinople, however definite and temporary the purpose, he has prevented discussions in Parliament. Had they taken place, and ambiguous and uncertain language been used about 'the occupation,' it would have been supposed that your Majesty's Government was vacillating and infirm: had, on the contrary, our ultimate and real purpose been expressed, the Porte would have felt that we were already virtually her allies, and taking advantage of our having committed ourselves, we should have been unable to make those conditions, and use that influence, which it will be necessary to exact and exercise, in order to obtain a satisfactory settlement.

The Cabinet to-day was solely busied with considering the Speech from the Throne: but they agreed to have a meeting before separation to decide upon what steps should be taken in the event, which it is hoped is now not probable, of a sudden recurrence to that dangerous position, which was threatened a fortnight ago, and that Constantinople might be endangered. It was also settled that, while Lord Derby and Lord Beaconsfield should remain in town, or in its immediate vicinity, the rest of the Cabinet must be prepared to reassemble frequently, and at a few hours' notice.

Note on the Cabinet of 15th August, '77.

OSBORNE.—After settling the answer to the Austrian note, Mr. Secretary Cross said there was an important, and as he thought, an urgent question for the decision of his colleagues. The unexpected course of events had relieved us from an embarrassing position with respect to the occupation of Constantinople by the Russians; but a similar state of affairs, as that from which we had been relieved, might recur, and in the separation of the Cabinet. The question was, What was the Cabinet prepared to do, in the event of the Russians again threatening to occupy Constantinople? Mr. Secretary Hardy, after a general pause, said he assumed that the Cabinet would act in the spirit they had previously decided on; that they would send up their fleet to Constantinople, and occupy all necessary positions. Lord Carnarvon asked,

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With or without the consent of the Sultan? General assent, with such consent. Whereupon Lord Carnarvon said 'that opened a large question—an alliance with Turkey, to which he could not agree.'

Prime Minister said, the first question was to decide, whether we should permit the occupation of Constantinople with impunity by the Russians. The means of prevention must be considered afterwards, and the consent of the Sultan was only one of these means. All agreed, with the exception of Lord Carnarvon, that, if the tide of affairs changed and that the occupation by the Russians of Constantinople this year appeared to be on the cards, the Cabinet should meet immediately, and take such steps as the exigency required, and of a similar character as previously contemplated. Lord Salisbury, however, did say, that he did not think the country was at present prepared to ally itself with Turkey. Prime Minister again observed, 'Sole question now to decide was, Would we interfere if Russians again menaced Constantinople?' There was no dissent except from Lord Carnarvon.

After this, Prime Minister said, there was another, and not less important, question to decide; that was, assuming the Russians could not overcome Turkey in one campaign, would England permit a second? This was a war of extermination.

Irrespective of English interests concerned, he doubted whether a system of strict neutrality should be maintained in a war avowedly, and practically, of extermination. He did not wish to bind the Cabinet by an immediate decision, but his own opinion was strong—that we, and Europe, ought not to tolerate another campaign. He wished the Cabinet now to discuss, and eventually to consider, our policy under these circumstances, and he should propose, that when it was apparent, and avowed, that the first campaign could not be decisive, the Cabinet should meet, and consider the course to be adopted to prevent a recurrence to arms in the spring.

There was much and general discussion on this matter, and a general, if not universal, opinion, that the British policy, under such circumstances, would be to prevent a second campaign.

Lord Derby said we should remember we had no allies.

Prime Minister observed, that in his opinion no other ally than Turkey was required; that, as for large armies, it was not for us to reconquer Bulgaria; that we were masters of the sea, and could send a British force to Batoum, march without difficulty through Armenia, and menace the Asiatic possessions of Russia.

These views were favorably received.

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In August an opportunity offered for one of those private negotiations outside the usual Foreign Office channels on which Beaconsfield throughout his life was disposed to place a somewhat excessive reliance. Colonel Frederick Arthur Wellesley, son of the first Earl Cowley, who was British military attaché in Russia, came to England from the Tsar's headquarters with personal assurances for the Queen and British Government from Alexander of the purity of his motives and the innocence of his intentions. His sole object was the amelioration of the lot of the Christians in Turkey; he had no thought of annexation save perhaps in Bessarabia and possibly in Asia Minor; a temporary occupation of Bulgaria would be inevitable, but he would only occupy Constantinople if such a step was rendered necessary by the march of events; he would in no wise menace British interests, either there or in Egypt, the Suez Canal, or India. Beaconsfield saw his chance of direct communication, and determined that Wellesley should carry back more than the official reply. In that document, he told him, it would, of course, not be possible to make use of language which could in any way be interpreted as a threat; and consequently it would necessarily be of a somewhat formal character, couched of course in conciliatory terms. He added, however, that Wellesley, having been made acquainted with the opinions both of the Queen and of the Prime Minister, would be in a position to explain to the Emperor the actual policy of Great Britain. Both Queen and Minister sincerely desired the re-establishment of peace, and would welcome any arrangement that would conclude the war that year in a manner honourable and satisfactory to Russia At the same time they feared that the neutrality of England could not be maintained, if the war were not soon terminated; but that, if there were a second campaign. England must necessarily take her place as a belligerent. 'This,' said Beaconsfield, 'is the policy of Great Britain; and as you have been told so both by the Queen and

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by myself, you are at liberty to put the case clearly to the Emperor in the manner you consider the most advisable.' He charged Wellesley, further, to impress on His Majesty's mind the perfect harmony of opinion existing between Queen and Minister, and the strength of the Beaconsfield Government.

On August 17 Wellesley supplied Corry with a memorandum explaining how he conceived his mission.

Memorandum by Col. the Hon. F. A. Wellesley.

The subject of the correspondence and conversations which have passed between the Queen, Lord Beaconsfield, and Col. Wellesley, to be considered secret and on no account to be mentioned at the Foreign Office.

Col. Wellesley is the bearer of an answer from Her Majesty's Government which he will communicate officially to the Emperor. Although Col. Wellesley has no orders from Lord Beaconsfield to make any further statement to His Majesty, it is thought advisable in the interests of Russia as well as of England, that the Emperor be informed with regard to the future attitude of this country under certain contingencies.

His Lordship has therefore communicated to Col. Wellesley his views and intentions, which coincide entirely with those of the Queen, and which it is left to Col. Wellesley's discretion to make known to the Emperor, should a favorable opportunity present itself.

The policy of the Government is as follows:

The Queen and H.M. Government have a sincere desire to see the speedy re-establishment of peace on terms honorable to Russia and would be glad to contribute to such a result; should, however, the war be prolonged and a second campaign undertaken, the neutrality of England could not be maintained and she would take her part as a belligerent.

In bringing the above facts to the knowledge of the Emperor it is most important that Col. Wellesley should disabuse His Majesty's mind of certain misconceptions which could only lead to a false appreciation of the actual state of affairs.

It has been stated that there are dissensions in the Cabinet which would prevent active intervention on the part of England. This is entirely false. The Cabinet is led by one mind and has the entire support of the Sovereign.

There exists perfect harmony of opinion between the Queen and Lord Beaconsfield respecting the foreign policy of the country. The Government is as strong as ever, and possesses

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the confidence of the people; which is proved by the present tranquil attitude of the public, who are convinced that the interests of England are safe in their hands.

It must not be thought that the policy of Lord Beaconsfield is one of hostility to Russia, and it might fairly be asked who has proved himself the greatest friend of Russia, Prince Bismarck or Lord Beaconsfield; the Chancellor who has done all in his power to urge Russia to undertake this disastrous war, or the Prime Minister who has endeavoured to save her from it?

It is commonly supposed in Russia that the mind of the English public is poisoned against Russia by Lord Beaconsfield, and that His Lordship is responsible for the present relations which exist between the two countries. Col. Wellesley is in a position to deny these statements, and to show that on the contrary it is Lord Beaconsfield who has recently discouraged discussions in Parliament with a view to avoiding the possibility of leading Turkey to believe that sooner or later England may be on her side, a belief which would no doubt have been created had the Government been compelled to make a distinct statement with regard to their future policy.

A private letter from Lord Beaconsfield to the Queen, which Her Majesty showed Col. Wellesley, proved that Lord Beaconsfield has checked Parliamentary discussion as well as anti-Russian public meetings with the object of avoiding all encouragement to Turkey.

However much Lord Beaconsfield may desire peace he is equally determined to uphold the honor and defend the interests of England, and Russia should not indulge in any erroneous impressions as to the weakness or vacillation of the British Government, which, Colonel Wellesley knows, enjoys the support of the Sovereign and the confidence of the nation.

Col. Wellesley should not fail to point out to the Emperor that the influence of the English Government at Constantinople is not by any means such as His Majesty appears to think, and that as a matter of fact the influence which Mr. Layard can bring to bear on the Porte is far more personal than official.

Col. Wellesley has had the exceptional advantage of two interviews with the Queen as well as frequent conversations with the Prime Minister, which has enabled him to obtain the most correct information with regard to the policy of England; and he is authorised, if necessary, to make use of the name of the Queen and that of Lord Beaconsfield in making this confidential communication to the Emperor of Russia.

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Wellesley carried out his mission with skill and tact. The Emperor, far from showing annoyance, expressed his thanks for the frankness with which he had been treated; and there can be little doubt that the vigour with which he prosecuted the war during the autumn and winter of 1877–8 was partly due to his knowledge that a second campaign would involve too much risk.

It was a questionable proceeding, no doubt, to send a message of this character to the Tsar behind the back of the Foreign Minister, and to intimate as the fixed resolution of the British Government a policy which had indeed the firm support of the Queen and the Prime Minister, but which had been only outlined to the Cabinet without being even definitely offered for their acceptance. The situation, however, was abnormal, and gave much excuse for abnormal treatment. There were British interests of great importance threatened by a victorious Russian advance and by the Pan-Slavonic feeling in Russia which victory would enhance; and Parliament and the country expected that those interests would be respected. But the only security we had was the assurance of a Government which had for years allowed the pressure of circumstances and of popular feeling to override and annul its assurances; and it was obvious to Beaconsfield that the binding value of this particular assurance would depend on our ability to convince the Russian Government that in the last resort England would fight. In the last resort he was resolved to fight; so was the Queen; and so, he believed, when the moment came, would the country be. But Derby's attitude and language, and the attitude and language of others of their colleagues, conveyed quite a different impression. The Queen wrote to Beaconsfield on August 1, urging strongly once more 'the importance of the Tsar knowing that we will not let him have Constantinople. Lord Derby,' Her Majesty continued, 'most likely says the reverse, right and left, and Russia goes on! It maddens the Queen to feel that all our efforts are

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being destroyed by the Ministers who ought to carry them out. The Queen must say that she can't stand it!' Moreover, Gladstone's agitation was still powerful in the country, encouraging Russia to believe that in her invasion of Turkey she would always have the sympathy, and never the resistance, of the British people. Beaconsfield might know his own mind; he might feel sure that, when the time came, he could dominate, or dispense with, his colleagues, and rally the country round him; but how was he to bring this home to the Tsar and the Russian Government through the ordinary Foreign Office channels? And for obvious reasons he was anxious to secure Derby's services down to the latest possible moment.

Beaconsfield spent the last half of August and the whole of September at Hughenden. He told Lady Bradford that he could not pay any country-house visits. 'The truth is that this place is now the headquarters of the Government, and I can't be away for more than an hour or two even if I wished. It rains telegrams morn, noon, and night, and Balmoral is really ceaseless. If I were not here, I must be at Whitehall.' From his Bucks home he watched with satisfaction the growing reaction throughout the country against the pro-Russian agitation; a reaction stimulated alike by the unpatriotic excesses of the agitators, and by the vigorous resistance which Plevna under Osman Pasha continued month after month to offer to the Russian advance. He was anxious to make Derby realise the significance of this development.

To Lord Derby.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 1, 1877.—I observe you have to go to some meeting in your county. I suppose it will be necessary to say something on public affairs, though silence is golden.

Let me impress upon you not to mistake the feeling of this country. It is for peace, but it is, every day, getting more Turkish.

It is for peace because it has confidence in our policy—*i.e.*, peace with British interests all safe.

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But we know this is a mere delusion, and that, had it not been for our good luck, British interests would not have been safe, the Russians would virtually have been at Constantinople, and Her Majesty's Government nowhere.

Opinion is getting more pro-Turkish every day, because the country recognises that the Turks have the vigor and the resources and the national spirit which entitle them to rank and to remain among the sovereign Powers of the world, and that there is no clear evidence that a better Government than the Ottoman can be established in the regions in question.

There is also to be noted that there is a deep feeling of discontent growing up about Servia. Its interference in the war would be greatly resented here, and I doubt whether it will be considered that we have denounced such a step with sufficient strength and earnestness.

It is to Russia and to Austria that we ought to have addressed ourselves, and to have warned those Powers that if they wish to preserve the neutrality of England, they must be careful in this matter.

The feeling is, that our honor is concerned in the issue—and I cannot say I think the feeling unfounded.

Pardon these rough hints.

Sept. 13.—I have reopened your box, to say that I have received your letter and entirely approve of your projected appointments. It will be a great thing to have got rid of Harris and Buchanan. I wish we could get rid of the whole lot. They seem to me to be quite useless. It is difficult to control events, but none of them try to. I think Odo Russell the worst of all. He contents himself with reporting all Bismarck's cynical bravadoes, which he evidently listens to in an ecstasy of sycophantic wonder.

Why does not he try to influence Bismarck, as the Prince controls him? Why does not he impress upon Bis., for instance, that if Germany and Austria police Poland, in order that Russia should add 50,000 men to her legions, England will look upon that as a gross breach of neutrality?

Why does he not confidentially impress upon Bismarck, that Turkey has shown such vigor and resource, that she has established her place among the sovereign Powers of Europe, and that if they continue to play their dark game of partition they must come in collision with England, who will not permit the breaking up of the Ottoman Empire?

As for the arrangement that Russian compensation is to be found in Armenia and so on, an English Army, 40,000 men, with the Black Sea and Batoum at our command, could march to Tiflis.

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We want no allies. We are not going to fight in Bulgaria. The situation is much the same as when Wellington went to the Peninsula, except that a Turk as a soldier is worth 20 Spaniards. What allies had we then?

The private correspondence of this month of September is of much and varied interest.

To Lady Bradford.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 6.—. . . I heard from Mr. Layard to-day. His date is Aug. 29, and much has happened, and is perhaps happening, since then. He seems to have completely re-established our influence at Constantinople, and to have entirely gained the Sultan's confidence, whom he continually represents to me as one of the most amiable men he ever knew; with nothing but good impulses. One result of the influence of Mr. Layard is that he has got rid of all the Ministers who were jealous of foreigners and so deprived the Sultan of the services of many distinguished English officers, now all employed; Baker Pasha among others.

Do not mention this letter of Mr. Layard, as ours is a 'secret' correspondence.

I am almost thinking of perpetrating a sort of atrocity here, and massacring the peacocks. They make a sorry show at this time of the year, with[ou]t their purple trains; a 'ragged regiment' on the terrace every morning, and all the flower-beds full of their moulting plumage, rarely with an Argus eye.

Perhaps you remember the church here. I was obliged, when I arrived, to have the pony chair to take me home—so slight a steep. Now, I can walk back.

Sept. 8.—. . . Windermere you had not seen of late, and it is redolent of romance, and poetry in its brightest form: romance of feeling I know from experience, for I recall my hours there with a sweet delight. But how you can every year repeat the dull monotonies of Longshaw and the conventional ceremonies of Sandbeck, I confess, astounds me; but I suppose miserable necessity binds you in its iron chain, and what is inevitable becomes, in a certain degree, natural. Yet life is very short, and to spend so much in the monotony of organised platitude is severe. . . .

Sept. 24.—. . . Pray give Laddo[1] a kiss for me, and try to see if he *really* remembers me. I like always experiments

[1] Lady Bradford's grandson, now the Earl of Bradford.

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on dawning intellect and memory. You must not give him the slightest clue, or any leading question. Talk about whips; ask, if he like them; whether he ever had any? and so on. If he remembers me *really*, give him two kisses; and, if he forget me, give him one. . . .

Sept. 29.—The Hardy visit was satisfactory—very. The Cabinet is summoned for Friday next; and after that we shall know better where we all are: but I don't think the state of affairs is dark. The only drawback is my health. I really don't see how I can meet Parlt. unless some change takes place. It wd. be impossible for me to address a public assembly. There is no one to consult. Gull, in whom I have little confidence, is still far away, and Dr. Kidd, whom all my friends wish me to consult, and who, of course, like all untried men, is a magician, won't be in town till the middle of Octr., and is such a swell that, I believe, he only receives, and does not pay, visits—convenient for a Prime Minister!

I can't conceive at my time of life miracles can be performed: still one must cling to hope, or rather patience, wh., as Horace Walpole says, is a good substitute for hope—when you are 70.

I did very well when I came down here, drank port wine, seemed to get quite strong, and got free of all bronchial distress: but after 3 weeks they [*sic*] reappeared in the aggravated form of asthma, and this destroys my nights and makes me consequently shattered in the day.

I think of going to Brighton, but dread the hardships of hotel life, where they give you only one sitting-room, and all your papers are moved, even when you eat an egg, or a slice of dried toast. I must have a sitting-room for myself; and they tell me it is not to be got. We live, I know, in more barbarous ages than we imagine, but this seems impossible!

It is, at this moment, difficult, almost out of mortal power, to retire from public life: and so far as Cabinets, and correspondence, and all that, are concerned, one can yet manage, and it all falls, and rightly, on me; but when it comes to speaking in public, one must have the physical ability, wh. I entirely lack—and have no chance of remedy, except sea air, or change of scene, or other commonplaces, in wh. really I don't in the least believe. . . .

Oct. 3.—Here is Robinson Crusoe on his island—with[ou]t even a parrot, only a peacock. What can he tell you, what say? Nothing, nothing; from Dan to Beersheba, all is barren. I really, literally, have not opened my mouth for two days, and shall not probably till Monty arrive at 6 o'ck. —if then he do arrive. . . .

What you say about Gladstone is most just. What rest-

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lessness! What vanity! And what unhappiness must be his! Easy to say he is mad. It looks like it. My theory about him is unchanged: a ceaseless Tartuffe from the beginning. That sort of man does not get mad at 70.

His *vanitas vanitatum* is to be a literary character, like Cardinal Richelieu, who was a great statesman, but never content unless he was writing a tragedy, sure to be applauded by his parasites. Now, there is not a form of literature wh. this man is not attempting, except a work of fiction—the test of all talents—for the greatest books are works of fiction, and the worst; as for instance *Don Quixote*, *Gil Blas*, *Wilhelm Meister*—and Mrs. [*sic*] Braddon, and the endless fry who imitate even her.

Gladstone, like Richelieu, can't write. Nothing can be more unmusical, more involved, or more uncouth than all his scribblement; he has not produced a page wh. you can put on yr. library shelves. . . .

Beaconsfield utilised the lull produced by the heroic resistance of Plevna for a further endeavour to bring his colleagues into line, and to keep them steadfast in upholding the national cause. The Queen used all her influence in the same direction.

From Queen Victoria.

BALMORAL, *Sept.* 26, 1877.—. . . The Queen will not fail to speak fully and strongly to the Chancellor. She has done so to Mr. Cross, who shares her views respecting a 2nd campaign and Constantinople. She is glad to hear that Lord Beaconsfield is going to have Mr. Hardy at Hughenden, and to prepare for eventualities. She trusts, however, that he will also see Sir S. Northcote. He may be a little nervous (he has had a terribly trying session) and disinclined for action, but he is sure to see things in the right light, if Lord Beaconsfield explains everything to him. She cannot overrate the importance of complete confidence between himself and the Leader of the House of Commons. If Lord Beaconsfield does not tell him anything before he learns it in the Cabinet, she fears he may feel hurt and discouraged, for he it is, who must defend and explain the foreign policy in the House of Commons. Lord Beaconsfield has so often asked her to give her opinion, that she trusts he will excuse her from mentioning what she thinks of such importance.

How well everything worked when Lord Beaconsfield acted as Leader in the House of Commons, and enjoyed the com-

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plete confidence of Lord Derby! It is so important that the Cabinet should present a united front, which she trusts and thinks it will (except in one or two instances), that the Queen has spoken out thus strongly and feels sure Lord Beaconsfield will appreciate it.

As the letters we have quoted show, Beaconsfield summoned Hardy, perhaps the one of his colleagues whose point of view most nearly coincided with his own, to a conference at Hughenden; and then, when agreement was obtained, he convened the Cabinet, writing a special appeal at least to Derby and to Salisbury. He urged the former, as Foreign Secretary, to take the lead in an active policy; but he urged in vain.

To Lord Derby.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 28, '77.—I have summoned the Cabinet for next Friday.

I wish to place before it this proposal:

It being of the utmost importance that there should not be a second campaign, the only object of which would be the seizure of Constantinople, it is proposed that Her Majesty's Ambassador should sound the Porte as to the terms of peace it is prepared to offer.

If they include the settlement of Bulgaria on the basis of the Protocol of London, and the restoration to Russia of the portion of Bessarabia, forfeited by the Treaty of Paris, it would seem that the honor of Russia would be sufficiently vindicated.

It is assumed, that the Porte would agree to these, or any other reasonable terms, provided England, if empowered, as mediator, to make them to Russia, and they being rejected by that Power, would assure the Porte, that, under such circumstances, we should depart from our present position of neutrality, and inform Russia, that, if Constantinople be menaced, England would afford material assistance to Turkey to prevent its seizure.

This is a clear and precise policy; it gets us out of all the embarrassing distinctions between temporary and permanent occupation, which harassed, and nearly humiliated, us last session; and, if rejected by Russia, would put her more in the wrong in the eyes of Europe, while it would place H.M. Government in an honorable, an intelligible, and popular position.

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What I should like most is, that the proposal should be made by yourself—the natural organ of the Government on these high matters; and it will be a source of the highest satisfaction to me, if, on reflection, you will comply with my wishes.

From Lord Derby.

KNOWSLEY, PRESCOT, *Sept.* 29, '77.—I am not sorry that you mean to call the Cabinet; both for the sake of the effect out of doors, and also because after two months, or nearly that time, it is well to compare notes.

There can be no harm in trying to find out what terms of peace the Turks would accept, when once the campaign of this year is over. I doubt whether they would give any opinion now, as they may still hope for successes that will alter their position.

I am not prepared to support the proposal which you suggest, still less to put it forward; but a preliminary discussion will be of use as showing how far, and on what points, there is likely to be agreement among us as to the course which we ought to take.

The Cabinet was held on October 5, and Beaconsfield found a general support for his views from Cairns, Hardy, Manners, Beach, and Richmond, and not so much opposition as he had feared from Derby and Salisbury.

To Queen Victoria.

(*Cypher Telegram.*) 10, DOWNING ST., *Oct.* 5, '77.—The Cabinet on the whole seemed indisposed to mix up the question of mediation with anything like a threat, but with the exception of Lord C. there seemed a general concurrence of opinion, that at the close of the campaign a formal, tho', if required, a secret engagement should be obtained from Russia, that she would not occupy that capital, while at the same time we should offer to Russia our offices to obtain favorable terms of peace from the other belligerent.

If she refused this engagement, then we must open Parliament with a vote of men and money. . . .

Secret. Oct. 6.—. . . Lord Beaconsfield is not, in any way, dissatisfied or disappointed by the Cabinet of yesterday. On the contrary, he looks forward with confidence to accomplishing, in due season, all your Majesty's wishes, which he himself entirely approves and sanctions, and so does the very large majority of the Cabinet. It was generally felt, and naturally, that it was impossible to take any active step

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in the prosecution of the proposal while the campaign was not concluded, as a simple military event might disturb all the calculations on either side.

Lord Beaconsfield was prepared for this objection, but was of opinion, that even a hypothetical discussion on the subject was preferable to prolonged silence and inertness. No inconsiderable effect was also produced by the intimation of Lord Derby, that he had had a confidential conversation with Count Schouvaloff at Knowsley, the upshot of which was, that His Excellency would not be surprised if, in the course of the winter, both belligerents might appeal to Great Britain. Lord Derby, who had been very cold, and evidently offended, in his previous correspondence with Lord Beaconsfield, spoke in the Cabinet with moderation, a due deference to the views of others, and in a view highly conciliatory.

Lord Salisbury was rather sharp, but made immense admissions towards the end of the discussion, of which the Lord Chancellor, who is a tower of strength to Lord Beaconsfield both for his intelligence and fidelity, made great use, and prepared the way for the decision of the next Cabinet on the subject.

Lord Carnarvon said little, but they were the words of a weak enthusiast dreaming over the celebration of High Mass in St. Sophia.

Lord Beaconsfield thanks very much your Majesty for your Majesty's kind enquiry as to himself. He cannot give a very brilliant bulletin of his condition, as he has had some relapse of late. It was unreasonable to expect that years of illness should be suddenly cured, but man is unreasonable, and, were he not, life would probably be intolerable. Lord Beaconsfield is going to Brighton to-day to escape the fall of the leaf in his own bowers. All he aspires to, is to secure sufficient health to be able to see your Majesty conclude your Majesty's present arduous labors and anxieties with honor and glory; and he shall then be quite content to say 'Nunc dimittis.' The crisis is one that requires unceasing thought and vigilance, and his attributes, in these respects, are not what they were, but so long as your Majesty has confidence in him, and assists him, as your Majesty has, throughout these great affairs, with your Majesty's counsel and active influence and support, the labor is most interesting, and even delightful. He heard from more than one of his colleagues, with much satisfaction, that your Majesty was looking so well, and full of spirit and energy. Your Majesty's demeanor has a beneficial effect on a timid or hesitating Minister, tho' that is not the character of any, who have had the honor of being your Majesty's guests.

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Beaconsfield spent three weeks at Brighton—'a treeless,' or 'a leafless Capua,' as he called it. He arrived on a Saturday, and on the front on the Sunday met an unexpected but not unwelcome acquaintance, the Russian Ambassador. He gave Lady Bradford a humorous account of the scene. 'Yesterday on the Prado, Schou. rushed up to me, full of overflowing affection, but doubtful how he wd. be received. Of course I returned all his effusion and took his arm (Monty having my other and Deym[1] hanging about Monty). The world seemed astonished by the spectacle and no doubt it has been telegraphed over Europe—and even Asia. Schou. wd. see me to my hotel door, and asked leave to call on me, etc., etc. Not the slightest allusion was made to public affairs.' But Schouvaloff came on the Tuesday for a political talk, and Beaconsfield gave the Queen a most interesting report of what was said. It will be seen that by this time the British Government had been informed that Austria had bound herself to Russia.

To Queen Victoria.

Secret. BRIGHTON, *Oct.* 10, '77.—. . . Count Schouvaloff called on me yesterday, at his desire, and 'to talk together like two private gentlemen, who are friends, and in the utmost confidence on public affairs,' which seemed to him 'dark.'

He called at one o'clock and stayed exactly one hour. With the exception, at the right moment, of a remark or two of mine respecting Sir Henry Havelock (having received your Majesty's cypher anent that morning) and once my strongly expressed opinion, that if there were a second campaign, it would be impossible for England to continue her state of neutrality, His Excellency occupied the whole time—about 55 minutes out of 60. He said, 'I have nothing to do; nothing can be done. Diplomacy has ceased. The position of Gortchakoff at Bucharest is humiliating. Nobody writes to him, nobody notices him. He says himself, "I am shelved." This combination of the three Imperial Courts was an invention of Prince Bismarck. You know what a state we find ourselves [in]; Austria is dying for peace, but Bismarck, who does nothing, and suffers nothing, is complete

[1] Austrian Ambassador.

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master, Andrassy only his Viceroy; and Russia and Austria are moved about by him like pieces at chess.'

He insisted, notwithstanding the assurance given by Count Andrassy to Lord Derby, thro' Buchanan and Beust, to the contrary, that there was a secret convention between Russia and Austria. He had seen it. He had been severely called to account, on his last, fruitless visit to St. Petersburg, for having 'let the cat out of the bag,' as it was agreed that it should be kept a secret from Beust. Schouvaloff defended himself on the ground that it was only by such a communication he could induce the English Government to act with energy on Turkey. He thought there would not be, what was called, a second campaign; that they would continue the present one; that something might occur in the late autumn, or the early winter, which might afford an opening. 'Much depended on the Emperor, who takes sudden resolves. Russian Government has credit always for deep designs: which sometimes helps them; but in truth very often, perhaps generally, it is a "Government of caprice," as all Governments must be which depend on the will of an individual surrounded by 2 or 3 hangers-on.' The Emperor, startled at the situation in which he finds himself, may take some sudden resolve. When Lord Beaconsfield, *dpropos* to a remark of the Count's, had very distinctly said, that our neutrality must cease if the war continued, His Excellency said, that he had in the most solemn and serious manner already impressed that upon the Emperor; that the whole tendency of affairs was to a war between Russia and England; that Bismarck desired it—and for this among other reasons: the whole commerce of Russia, which is a commerce mainly of exports, in the event of the Baltic and the Black Seas being blockaded, must be carried on by the German railways; and the impulse to business of Germany would be great. That impulse too was wanted. It would seem that Prince Gortchakoff and Gen. Ignatieff are both in disgrace, tho' Count S. was reserved on these points. It had been the common saying of Ignatieff, when they were discussing the war at Livadia, that 'Turkey has no soldiers.' The Emperor, therefore, is a little surprised at the military reception that has greeted him in Bulgaria. These are some of the principal, but only a portion, of the singular monologue of yesterday, Ld. Beaconsfield believes sincere and straightforward: a deliverance of a pent-up diplomatic spirit amid the sounds and shocks of that war, which has 'shelved' him. . . .

Letters to Lady Bradford show the difficulties under which Beaconsfield carried on his work at Brighton.

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To Lady Bradford.

[BRIGHTON], *Oct.* 11.—. . . Monty leaves me to-day, and to my great annoyance. He certainly has been with me a couple of months, but I certainly shd. not have come here, had I not understood he was to remain with me. One requires someone in this bustling, idle, place, to guard one from 'third parties' who are ever attacking and invading you in every form. But what am I to do? He says he is ill: as Sir Charles Bagot wd. say—his old complaint. . . .

It comes at a moment of great public anxiety, for I have no substitute for him. The other two are faithful, and able, and gentlemen; but I can't live with them, as I do with Monty: so I am obliged to have one of them down, every other day, to clear the decks; and the telegraph and the messengers seem never to cease coming and going. . . .

B., *Oct.* 13.—. . . Whenever Monty leaves me, having convinced himself that nothing can happen for a while, the most pressing business always immediately prevails. It has happened remarkably so this time. Lord Tenterden comes down to me this afternoon, and dines and sleeps here. I have given him Monty's room, so he is my guest. Poor Algernon Turnor, who, unbidden, would come down out of pure devotion, and thinks it 'horrid' that Monty has left me, is at the Bedford, and has to call in the morning for orders and all that. . . .

Beaconsfield interrupted his sojourn at Brighton to pay a visit, for the second time, to the great Whig magnate, the Duke of Bedford,[1] at Woburn Abbey. When announcing his intention to Lady Bradford, Beaconsfield had written: 'It is rather a bold step in the Duke of Bedford to have a Tory party at such a place; but I am to meet Derby there, and it looks like it. The world goes round.' But it was hardly a Tory party after all, as Derby was prevented from going by a bad cold, and, with the exception of Lady Derby, the remainder of the guests had a distinctly Whiggish flavour. Beaconsfield described the social aspect of the gathering in his letters to Lady Bradford, and its political value in a report to his Sovereign.

[1] The ninth Duke (Hastings), who at the time of the previous visit, though he already occupied Woburn, had not succeeded to the title. See Vol. IV., p. 421.

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To Lady Bradford.

WOBURN ABBEY, *Oct.* 17, 1877.—. . . Our party, Ld. Lyons, the Odos, Lady Derby, Dean of Westminster, Henry Cowper, Jowett, and the family, Tavistocks and all. One of the daughters I like, Lady Ela. She is very good-looking and intelligent. Lady Cowley also here.

Arrived before six o'ck. tea; glad to have it, as I was cold and voiceless. Duke, whom I always like, and who received me with cordial ceremony, soon suggested that I might like to go to my rooms, but I had not had my tea, and did not want to be dismissed for two hours. Still he hung about me, and, in due season, tho' once repulsed, and tho' nobody else was moving, he 'still harped upon my daughter,' and would insist upon showing me to my room. It seems the State suite was prepared for me, wh. is very gorgeous, and he wished, I suppose, personally to witness the effect produced upon his guest. I sleep in a golden bed, with a golden ceiling, and walls covered with masterpieces of modern art—Landseer, Linton, Newton and Leslie, and, in the right place, the picture of the trial of Ld. Russell by Hayter. Then I have a writing-room, not less magnificent, and that opens into a third long gallery room, 'where,' the Duke said, 'you are to receive yr. Ambassadors,' they being, I suppose, Odo and Lyons. . . .

BN., *Oct.* 21.—. . . The visit to Woburn was not so irksome as I feared. It was not too long—but I feel, every year more, that country-house visiting is very irksome: it is too conventional. In this case, however, there was business to be done. . . .

To Queen Victoria.

2, WHITEHALL G'D'NS, *Oct.* 18, '77.—Lord Beaconsfield . . . has just returned from Woburn, and writes this between the two railroads, on his way to Brighton. The defeat of the Turks seems complete, and is a disaster. Tho' a striking success, being in Asia, it is feared it will not be considered by the Emperor as sufficient for a basis of negotiation: while, at the same time, it may revive the contemplated claim for Batoum, which it was impossible for Russia to urge, or even mention, a week ago.

Lord Beaconsfield has had long conferences at Woburn with Lord Odo and Lord Lyons. They are both absolutely cowed by Prince Bismarck. Lord Lyons even fears the Prince coquetting with the Gambetta party, and promising Egypt to France, as a compensation for Alsace and Lorraine. If there were any fear of that, of which we should no doubt have advice in time, your Majesty must occupy Egypt. Prince Bismarck cannot be more formidable than the first

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Napoleon. Then we were told we had no allies, which was quite true; nevertheless, we were victorious. Lord Lyons sighs over the absence of our prestige. The best way, if it is lost. Pressed very hard, Lord Odo admitted that Prince Bismarck would consent to peace, provided Russia had obtained some signal success. He did not wish her to be too much humiliated. According to him, nothing is decided either at St. Petersburg or Vienna, without consulting the Prince. He is an autocrat. But Lord Odo thinks, under no circumstances will he send German troops into Turkey, which the Emperor of Germany wishes; public opinion in Germany is strongly against that, and against increased military expenditure generally.

The Duke of Bedford has had great havoc in his elm avenues from the storm, but 'at any rate, my house is not burnt down,' he adds. Since the Inveraray calamity, he has had Shaw down, who told him that a single spark, and Woburn Abbey would burn like paper, not a scrap would remain. So they have an internal, and external, watchman at night. The Duke is a strange character. He enjoys his power and prosperity, and yet seems to hold a lower opinion of human nature than any man Lord Beaconsfield was ever acquainted with. He is a joyous cynic.

Box opened to say Lord Beaconsfield has seen Lord Derby, a cynic also, but not a joyous one. Lord Derby did not go to Woburn, as he had a cold so savage, that it incapacitates him for 'society.' He thinks the Asian victory, tho' probably very decided, will lead to no results, as it is too late in the year to campaign in Armenia. All depends now on Plevna, where the Russians are determined to make a great effort; if defeated, the Asian victory will be forgotten, or altogether be a barren triumph; if successful, the Russians will, he thinks, open negotiations, or cause them to be opened directly. Does not foresee any great difficulties about territory, and feels convinced that Constantinople is in no danger, but anticipates difficulties, and vast difficulties, as to the Government of Bulgaria. The Porte will not, and cannot be expected to, give up the military and civil supremacy of that province. He was mild, moderate, and conciliatory. What he will be in the November Cabinet, remains to be seen.

Your Majesty must pardon these rough lines. They are, as it were, from your Majesty's 'own correspondent,' and written, as it were, in the saddle.

The victory of the Russians in Armenia added to the depression felt by Beaconsfield in consequence of his

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total inability to rally in Brighton air. He ended his seaside sojourn in very low spirits.

To Lady Bradford.

B[RIGHTON], *Oct.* 23.—. . . I am very ill. . . . If I could only face the scene wh. would occur at headquarters if I resigned, I would do so at once; but I never cd. bear scenes, and have no pluck for the occasion.

Schou. called on me on Saty. afternoon (late) and stayed a long while. I knew he came to talk about the victory, and I was resolved not to help him, so he was obliged to break it at last.

He was 'candid,' as usual, but not 'gay': evidently depressed. He said it was a decided victory: the only real battle since the war (not true, for 2nd Plevna was a real battle and a great one), 'but it was not in the right place.' 'The Danube must decide the course of events, and he feared that his countrymen had already been repulsed again at Plevna.' This turned out to be true: but I think his depression was occasioned by something more serious than a military defeat. He knew then, what I only knew last night, that the collapse of the Russian army is complete. They acknowledge to have lost (dead) 50,000 in war; but they have 20,000 in nominal hospitals at Plevna, housed in worse than pigsties, and perhaps 30,000 on the Lom and Shipka: all these will die. The Imperial Guard, just arrived, in a horrid state. Half their horses are already dead. The only fodder prepared for them being compressed hay, wh. was damp, or in a state of effervescence, and the horses won't touch it. Literally half the horses that first arrived, dead! Our informant seems to think that, instead of a winter campaign in Bulgaria, we may perhaps look out for a 'retreat-from-Moscow catastrophe.' And all this is concealed from the Emperor and the Russian nation—the only two influences that could bring about peace. .

The people here are asking me to dinner, wh. is pestiferous. I send their invitations up to town, to be answered by Mr. Algernon Turnor. I hope this will sicken them. . . .

Oct. 25.—. . . I speak the truth to you on some matters, tho' I may not, on such, to others. When I say I am ill, I mean it. I leave this place, wh. I do on 29th, in no degree better, as regards the main and only suffering—asthma. I am now inhaling, night and day; a last desperate effort, and futile.

It is quite impossible I can go on, because the Constitution

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of this country is a Parliamen[tar]y Govt.—'c'est un gouvernement qui parle.' I can't lead a House of Pt., even H. of L., witht. a voice—witht. health. And Lord Mayor's Day, when my words may govern the world, what am I to do? If it were not for the Faery, I certainly wd. at once retire, but I wait her return before it is broached.

On his way back to London he paid a two days' visit to Lord Abergavenny at Eridge. There he met, and did 'some good business' with, Cairns and Hardy. He also tells Lady Bradford: 'I was shown the tree I planted in '68, with an inscription: "Prime Minister, etc." Now this morning I have planted another tree, which I shall not see after another nine years.[1] He did not go to Whitehall Gardens, but to the official residence in Downing Street, 'to avoid,' he told Lady Bradford, 'my terrible steep Whitehall stairs, which I cannot manage.' For the remainder of his Premiership he lived, when in London, at 10, Downing Street. He had the November Cabinets before him, and the Lord Mayor's banquet. 'I have not accepted the Lord Mayor's dinner yet,' he told Corry on October 28, 'for I shrink from an occasion which will be like a roarer entering for the Derby. And yet if I don't go, I shall feel dishonored.' Happily he at last found a physician, Dr. Kidd, who seemed to understand his case, who patched him up for the Guildhall banquet, and who afforded him some prospect of more than temporary relief.

To Lady Bradford.

10, DOWNING STREET, *Nov.* 1.—. . . To-day I saw Dr. Kidd, who cured the Ld. Chancellor. I like him much. He examined me as if I were a recruit—but reports no organic deficiency. My complaint is bronchial asthma, more distressing than bronchitis, but curable, wh. bronchitis is not, and I am to be cured—and very soon![1]

This is a ray of hope, and I trust I may get to the Lord Mayor's dinner, for if I do not Europe will be alarmed,

[1] Dr. Kidd also diagnosed Bright's disease, which gave him great trouble, as Beaconsfield would take no exercise save a slow saunter. See article by Dr. Kidd in *Nineteenth Century* for July, 1889, 'The last illness of Lord Beaconsfield.'

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England agitated, and the Tory party frightened. There is egotism for you! . . .

Nov. 6.—Very hard work: Cabinet every day and another to-morrow; the Lord Mayor's fell banquet haunting me, if I be a moment idle—and an M.D. coming every day to try to get me up for Friday! What a picture of horrors to write about, but I have nothing else to say, and you don't like silence. . . .

I fear the Turks are annihilated in Asia; that the Russians are already at Erzeroum and that Kars will fall. . . .

Plevna is our only chance. Osman Pasha is a real general—even the English officers say so; but no one really knows the elements of the position: whether he has troops enough, or rations enough, or whether the weather will smash the Russians, these are the points. . . .

Nov. 7.—. . . Affairs in France are grave. There will be no riot—but the Marshal[1] must resign; people laugh at him—and that is fatal at Paris. Playing at being a hero and not doing it, does not answer Nothing justified his conduct, but the predetermination of a *coup d'état*. . . .

Nov. 13.—. . . I had made up my mind never to breathe a word as to my progress, or the reverse, until I had given my new man a fair and real trial: but, as you press me, and I can refuse you nothing, I will tell you that I entertain the highest opinion of Dr. Kidd, and that all the medical men I have known, and I have seen some of the highest, seem much inferior to him, in quickness of observation, and perception, and in the reasonableness, and at the same time originality, of his measures. I am told his practice is immense, and especially in chest and bronchial complaints. The difficulty is in seeing him, as he does not like to leave his house. . . .

Beaconsfield said little of moment at Guildhall, but he made it clear that he was resolved that British interests should be respected, and that he sympathised with the plucky resistance which the Turks were making. He defined the policy of the Government as having been throughout one of conditional neutrality—neutrality, that is, so long as British interests were not assailed or menaced. 'Cosmopolitan critics, men who are the friends of every country save their own, have denounced this policy as a selfish policy. My Lord Mayor, it is as selfish as patriotism.' The war had shown, he maintained, that the Turkish Government was no fiction, nor were

[1] Macmahon, President of the French Republic.

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the Turkish people effete; the independence of Turkey was no longer a subject of ridicule. As to the prospects of peace, he recommended patience and hope.

Meanwhile his letters to the Queen show the progress he was making in bringing his abinet to view the situation with his eyes.

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING ST., *Nov.* 1, '77.—. . . The circumstances have become more complicated, and difficult, but, he thinks, he sees his way. What the Cabinet will have to decide on their meeting is, whether they shall make an immediate—but secret—conciliatory communication to Russia, requiring a written undertaking from Russia that she will not, under any circumstances, even occupy Constantinople. Lord Beaconsfield has had an interview with Lord Derby on this matter, and it was not discouraging. Lord Beaconsfield is to see Lord Salisbury upon it to-morrow. Lord Beaconsfield thinks he shall succeed in carrying this important point. He has impressed Lord Derby with the fact, that it is only carrying into effect the policy for which the country gives him credit.

What we should do in case of Russia's refusal is clear to Lord Beaconsfield, and he will take an early opportunity of laying it before your Majesty, but he does not think it wise that the primary step, which he wishes the Cabinet to adopt, should be involved with any consideration of merely hypothetical circumstances. What he is now about to say has no reference to his policy; or to the measures, which, if necessary, he contemplates: but he would remark to your Majesty that, so far as a march on Constantinople is concerned, there is now no fear of a *coup de main*. Constantinople itself is now strongly fortified; both Peninsulas, Gallipoli and Durkos, being in a state of defence which, with sufficient troops, would render them impregnable, and, with insufficient troops, would offer a long resistance. Adrianople, too, which was an open town, is now as strong as Plevna. . . .

He hopes your Majesty will not misconceive this letter, or think for a moment that he is reserved in communicating with your Majesty; he wishes never to have a thought on affairs, which your Majesty should not share, but he has been suffering a great deal of late and is physically incapable, to-day, of putting his views before your Majesty. . . .

Secret. Nov. 3.—Lord Beaconsfield with his humble duty to your Majesty. Government in Cabinet are about to re-

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assemble, in order to consider their general policy, and the measures to be submitted to Parliament. Lord Beaconsfield thinks your Majesty should be made accurately acquainted with the views and feelings of the various members of the Cabinet, with respect to the Eastern Question, in which your Majesty, naturally, takes so deep an interest.

In a Cabinet of twelve members, there are seven parties, or policies, as to the course which should be pursued.

1st, the War Party pure and simple: which is of opinion that the time has arrived when material assistance should be afforded to the Porte. This party is headed by Mr. Secretary Hardy, supported by Lord John Manners, Sir M. Beach, and, before his untimely end, by the late First Lord of the Admiralty [Ward Hunt].

2nd, the party which is prepared to go to war, if Russia will not engage not to occupy Constantinople. The party consists of the Lord Chancellor, Mr. Secretary Cross, the present First Lord of the Admiralty [W. H. Smith], and the Duke of Richmond.

3rd, the party that is prepared to go to war, if, after the signature of peace, the Russians would not evacuate Constantinople. This party consists of the Marquis of Salisbury.

4th, the party of 'peace at any price' represented by the Earl of Derby.

5th, the party, which disapproves of any policy avowedly resting on what are called 'British interests,' which is considered 'a selfish policy' (almost as selfish as patriotism), and is in favor of an address to the four other neutral Powers, inviting them to join us 'in making some kind of appeal to the belligerents.' These are the views, very briefly, of the Chancellor of Exchequer. They are utterly futile, and assuming as they do that Prince Bismarck, who is master of the situation, would join with the other neutral Powers in such a step, they approach silliness.[1]

The 6th policy is represented by Lord Carnarvon, who did not conceal, at the last meeting of the Cabinet, his inclination, that Constantinople should be permanently acquired by Russia. These are the views of Lyddon, Freeman, and other priests and professors, who are now stirring in favor of the 'freedom of the Dardanelles.'

The 7th policy is that of your Majesty, and which will be

[1] In talking to Northcote Beaconsfield gave a similar account of the parties in the Cabinet, save that, in compliment to his interlocutor, he associated him with himself as desiring to see something done. But Northcote himself wrote about his views to Beaconsfield from Balmoral on Nov. 16: 'As you know, mine are not wholly in unison with those of anybody else in the Cabinet.'

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introduced, and enforced to his utmost by the Prime Minister: —viz., that, in the first place, the Cabinet shall decide upon something, and if so, that the something shall consist of a notification to Russia, that the present state of British neutrality cannot be depended on for another campaign unless your Majesty's Government receives a written engagement from Russia, that under no circumstances will she occupy Constantinople or the Dardanelles. The engagement on the part of Russia, of course, to be secret.

Lord Beaconsfield has been active since his arrival in town, and seeing and conferring with some of his most important colleagues, and he believes he shall carry his proposal, unanimously, with the exception of Lord Carnarvon, who will probably resign. What course should be pursued if Russia refuses, has been enquired by several, but, as the notification would at once break up the Cabinet, Lord Beaconsfield has declined to enter into the consideration of hypothetical circumstances. When the reply of Russia is received, the Cabinet will then have the opportunity of considering again the situation. Lord Beaconsfield is far from believing that Russia will decline our proposal, but, in that case, there is, according to his view, only one step to take. For your Majesty, in your Majesty's Speech from the Throne, to notice in a becoming manner the situation, and a considerable increase of the army to be immediately proposed. The Lord Chancellor and Mr. Secretary Hardy both agreed in this, when it was intimated to them at Eridge.

(*Cypher.*) FOREIGN OFFICE, *Nov.* 5, '77.—I proposed the policy agreed upon, which Lord Carnarvon immediately opposed, but as, to his evident surprise, it was supported both by Lord Salisbury and then Lord Derby, he was routed. . . .

Throughout the later autumn months the Russians continued their successes in Asia, and it became more and more evident each day that, if Plevna fell, Turkey would lie at the mercy of her foe, and the road would be open to those regions where British interests were centred. The agitation of the Queen increased, and Beaconsfield found it difficult to satisfy her; while, on the other hand, Derby, now that the moment for action appeared to be approaching, became more obstinately set than ever on a purely passive policy. 'I gather from my lady D[erby]' wrote Corry to his chief on October 31, 'that

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our friend is as resolute as ever to keep his hands in his pockets.' On a deputation which waited on him at the Foreign Office on November 28 to advise 'a bold course at a critical moment,' Derby poured a plentiful douche of cold water, making light of possible danger to British interests, and reminding his hearers that the French Minister who in 1870 went to war with a light heart 'did not come out of it with a light heart—neither he, nor his master, nor his country.' It could no longer be doubted that he and his chief were drifting apart. Meanwhile Beaconsfield, while he anxiously watched events, took advantage of the respite which Kidd procured him from his malady to appear somewhat more frequently in society.

To Lady Bradford.

10, DOWNING STREET, *Nov.* 19, 1877.—. . . The fall of Kars is a great blow, the more so as I saw Musurus yesterday, or rather received him, for he came with a telegram from the Sultan to thank me for my Guildhall speech, and Musurus told me to be quite easy about Asia, that they cd. not take Erzeroum, and that Kars was provisioned for months!

Nov. 21.—. . . I was much amused at Gorhambury—a very fine collection of portraits of the Baconian age. Except my host, there was no one of my generation: more than that, there was no one of Monty's, who still figures as a young man. There were six heirs-apparent, whose collected ages could hardly secure them, on an average, of having completed their majority: Mountcharles, Wiltshire, Newark, Grimston, Duncombe, and Scudamore-Stanhope. When they were presented to me, I had to tell them that I had sate in Parliament not only with their fathers, but the race before them. They were all men (or boys), who may, and must, exercise considerable influence in this country, and it was amusing to watch them. They went out shooting, and shot each other, and a beater or two—but it was kept a secret from the ladies.

I arrived at Pancras station this morning at ½ past ten, and, my brougham waiting, got to the Oratory, late, but in time.[1] There was as great a crowd from Hyde Park Corner to Brompton as on Lord Mayor's Day. When I arrived, it was supposed to be the bride, and the whole church, very long and very full, rose, and were sadly disappointed when it was

[1] For the marriage of the 15th Duke of Norfolk to Lady Flora Hastings.

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only I, in a fur coat and your rustic stick, wh. I had taken with me to Gorhamy. The ceremony was long, and all the severest Gregorian music. I confess I like a little more florid music, which Bute gave us.

I was one of the witnesses summoned to the vestry: and afterwards there was a breakfast at the bride's father's, and I had to propose her health. This latter business, as well as my speech, was not too long, as, tho' the repast was most elaborate, it was necessary for the bride and bridegroom to arrive at Arundel in full daylight, as there was an immense reception prepared there for them.

I got to business at ½ past two, saw Lord Derby with whom I had an appointment, and am now waiting to see Schou., who has an appointment also—tho' later. . . .

Dec. 6.—. . . The victory of Suleiman Pasha is a great affair, and if he can follow it up and take Tirnova, the experts think that Osman in Plevna is saved. But that seems too good to be true. . . .

Dec. 7—Just returned from [Windsor]. The audience lasted from 12.30 to luncheon time, when I joined that lively and interesting being the Duchess of —— and three younger female courtiers, who vied with her in loveliness, and fascinating manners. Nothing cd. be more formal than the hushed tones of their conversation, and it was impossible to assert one's share in it. I was fairly famished, and was ashamed of my silence. At last, I said I had a special train, and, if they liked, I wd. take them all up to town with me. They seemed shocked and terrified, and when, in reply to what wd. then happen, I promised to give them a dinner at a café, and take them all to the play, I thought the ceiling wd. have fallen down. The Duchess took it all quite *au sérieux*. . . .

To Queen Victoria.

10, Downing St., *Nov.* 16, '77.—Lord Beaconsfield . . . is distressed by the telegram received from your Majesty yesterday, and by the letter of this morning. He entirely sympathises with all your Majesty feels, but he cannot but believe that, on continued reflection, your Majesty may be of opinion, that, however vexatious and disheartening the occurrence of certain possible contingencies in Bulgaria may be to your Majesty, neither the honor of your Majesty, nor of your Crown, Government, or people, could be involved in them.

Unquestionably the fall of Plevna, which has not yet fallen, would be a calamity to this country, but it would not be a disgrace. If the relations of Russia with England were the same as in the Crimean War, it would be our duty to exert

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our utmost to prevent the fall of Plevna, but they are not so Then the passage of the Pruth was a *casus belli*, and we were justified in resisting the invasion of the Principalities and Bulgaria. Now, we have adopted and announced a different policy: one of neutrality, conditional on no British interest being menaced or attacked. We have defined those British interests. The occupation by Russia of Constantinople, or the Dardanelles, would assail one of those interests, and the honor of your Majesty's Crown, of your Government and your people would then be forfeited, if your Majesty, by all the means in your Majesty's power, did not endeavor to guard your Majesty's Empire from such a result.

Lord Beaconsfield has wished to place the position of affairs before your Majesty in as clear and terse a manner, as in his power, but he does not wish to conceal his great regret at even appearing to differ in opinion from your Majesty, not merely from his relations, as one of your Majesty's servants, but from his unfeigned confidence in your Majesty's judgment.

Lord John Manners to Queen Victoria.

Dec. 4, 1877.—Lord John Manners with his humble duty to your Majesty. At the Cabinet, after a short statement by the Prime Minister, Lord Derby explained why the preparation of the note to Russia, which had been determined upon by a previous Cabinet, had been postponed, and then read the draft as he had originally drawn it, consisting of two parts—the 1st, asking Russia in courteous terms for a definite answer to our conditions of neutrality as to Constantinople and the Dardanelles; the 2nd containing an assurance that if her reply on those two points was satisfactory we should take no steps to oppose her further advance in Europe, or Asia. Lord Derby went on to say that, while the second part was drawn according to his notes taken at the time, he understood that the recollection of some of his colleagues was of a different character. He ended by suggesting that the note, instead of the form of a question, should assume that of a warning to Russia that if her armies appeared to menace Constantinople or the Dardanelles, Great Britain would reserve her liberty of action; omitting the second part altogether.

Lord Cairns stated his recollection to be at variance with that of Lord Derby as to the 2nd part of the proposed note, and proceeded to suggest that a tentative effort at mediation should now be made on the basis of the Russian note of June 8th; and that the Porte should be informally sounded as to its disposition in that respect. Most of the Cabinet,

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Lord Derby at first dissenting, were of that opinion, and all agreed that a note of warning would be preferable to one of enquiry. Ultimately on Lord Beaconsfield's suggestion the two ideas were combined and Lord Derby was requested to draw up a note, for consideration at the next Cabinet, which should couple the warning to Russia with an intimation that your Majesty's Government would gladly tender its good offices for a pacification. . . .

To Lord Derby.

10, DOWNING ST., *Dec.* 5, '77.—I have to be at Windsor on Friday, at noon, and I don't anticipate a very agreeable audience.

I consented to change, yesterday, the form of the note to Russia, which the Cabinet had previously agreed to, in compliance with your wishes, which I always wish to meet if possible, but I prefer the original proposal.

I trust by Friday your colleagues may be in possession of the dr't note, so that they may well consider it, before Saturday morning.

Its tone cannot be too firm and clear. Whatever may be told to you, I believe that Russia, generally, is more ready for peace than her journals pretend, but the war party is encouraged by our presumed supineness.

I was sorry to hear you say yesterday, that you were not prepared to make the occupation of Constantinople, or rather the menaced occupation of that city, a *casus belli*. I hope I misunderstood you. I hold, myself, both this event, if impending, as well as the simultaneous opening of the Straits to Russia and their closing to other Powers, should decidedly be *casus belli* for this country, with or without allies. And with regard to this last consideration, we should remember that Turkey herself is now a powerful ally. In the Crimean War, she literally had no army. After a fierce campaign, she has still 400,000 men in the field, armed with admirable weapons; her arsenals are well supplied, and it is not impossible, by any means, that the loan, which she has opened at Bombay and Calcutta, may be subscribed to the amount of some millions.

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CHAPTER VI.

Derby's First Resignation.

1877–1878.

Plevna fell on December 9. Beaconsfield recognised immediately that the moment had come for public action, which should show unmistakably to the world that England was in earnest in her resolve to protect her interests. He telegraphed to the Queen from Hughenden, on the 11th, that he had summoned a Cabinet for Friday the 14th, and that he would propose 'that Parliament should meet as soon as practicable, and that the Speech from the Throne should announce a large increase in your Majesty's armaments, and also the undertaking, on the part of your Majesty, at the invitation of the Sultan, to mediate between the belligerents.' The Queen, who had long pressed for definite action, warmly seconded her Minister; and on the eve of the meeting urged him once more to be firm, 'and not give way to anyone, even if Lord Derby should wish to resign.'

To mark the definiteness of his resolve and his intention to advance regardless of the possible defection of individual colleagues, Beaconsfield made no attempt, as on other occasions, to secure support for his proposals beforehand, nor did he solicit, as he had during the past months solicited, and solicited in vain, the Foreign Secretary to assume the responsibility of putting forward the policy as his own. The proposals were, indeed, not exactly a novelty to his colleagues, as he had often indicated measures of the kind as those which must be taken when the critical moment came. But before he rose in Cabinet

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to move their adoption now, he had taken no one into his confidence save his Sovereign. To her he reported what passed.

To Queen Victoria.

MEMORANDUM OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HOLDEN ON DEC. 14, 1877.

HUGHENDEN, *Dec.* 14, '77.—Lord Beaconsfield, calling the attention of his colleagues to the critical state of affairs in the East, and to the absolute necessity of adopting means to secure the conditions on which the policy of neutrality, hitherto pursued, was founded, concluded by proposing that your Majesty should be advised to summon Parliament immediately; that a considerable increase of your Majesty's forces should be proposed; and that your Majesty should simultaneously commence negotiations, as mediator, between the belligerents. No previous intimation to any one had been given of these proposals, and when they had been made there was a dead silence, broken, at last, by Lord John Manners, who supported them with much energy and ability.

Then Lord Carnarvon, after many cavils, enquired for whom was England to hold Constantinople in the event of our succeeding in defeating the attempt of the Russians to occupy it?

The Lord Chancellor spoke at some length; said Lord Carnarvon had involved a simple question with fallacies. What we had to decide, was whether, now that the contemplated circumstances were at hand, we were prepared to support the policy which we had announced as the only course efficient to prevent these circumstances. In his opinion, the measures recommended by the Prime Minister were not only adequate, but the only ones left open to us.

Mr. Secretary Hardy spoke in the same vein, and entered into some military details.

The Marquis of Salisbury saw no abstract objection to the proposals of the Prime Minister, but, practically, they would lead to an alliance with Turkey, to which he could not assent. The Chancellor of the Exchequer asked Lord Salisbury what then was the alternative? Some course must now be taken. What other course was there? No one could ever answer this question. The C. of Ex'r said he was not only for a vote of men and money, but for a large vote, as the best means to secure peace.

Mr. Secretary Cross said one thing was quite clear, that it was necessary the Government should make up their minds about what they would do before they met Parliament. He

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thought they had decided to prevent the occupation of Constantinople by the Russians, but it would seem, from what had fallen from Lord Carnarvon, and, in some degree, from Lord Salisbury, that was not the case.

Sir Michael Beach spoke shortly, but very strongly, in the same vein. The Duke of Richmond had done so previously.

The First Lord of the Admiralty [W. H. Smith] was in favour of calling Parliament together, and of large increase of force, but wished the mediation to commence immediately, as, if the attempt failed, the position of the Government, in asking for increased supplies, would be stronger.

Then Lord Derby spoke at length. He had been taken by surprise, and had not had time to give due consideration to the proposals, but, as at present advised, he entirely disapproved of them. We had sent a note to Russia, and should await her answer. There was no *casus belli* in that note, and he wished distinctly to say, that he was not prepared to look upon the occupation of Constantinople by the Russians as a *casus belli*. Lord Derby spoke at some length, and with unusual fire. The general tenor of his observations was that any active interference in Eastern affairs by England was to be deprecated.

There was a good deal of sharp remark from several members of the Cabinet, as he spoke and after he had concluded.

The Prime Minister said, that he did not wish to hurry the Cabinet into a resolution, which was the most important they had yet been called upon to adopt, but affairs were pressing. He should like Parliament to be summoned as soon as practicable in the next month. With regard to the Russian Note, his present proposals were perfectly consistent with that and all our previous steps. He desired peace, anxiously, but he wished the country to be placed in a position, which would give her authority in arranging and settling the terms of that peace. The Cabinet adjourned till Monday, when every effort will be made to bring the question to a conclusion.

Before the Cabinet resumed the discussion on the following Monday, they and the country and the world had a proof of the exceptional confidence which the Queen reposed in her Prime Minister, of the exceptional friendship with which Her Majesty honoured him. The royal visit to Hughenden which had been first suggested in the spring was paid on Saturday, December 15; and was intended no doubt to emphasise the support which the Sovereign extended to the Eastern policy of the Minister.

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QUEEN VICTORIA.

From the portrait at Hughenden by Von Angeli.
Presented by Her Majesty to the Earl of Beaconsfield.

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In one respect the date chosen was unfortunate. It was the anniversary of Lady Beaconsfield's death.

From Queen Victoria.

WINDSOR CASTLE, *Dec.* 15.—The Queen is anxious to express her concern at having inadvertently fixed this day of such sad recollections to Lord Beaconsfield for her visit to Hughenden; and she wishes he should know that she only found out what she had done, when it was too late to alter it. But it has annoyed her very much.

'The contiguity of a largish town,' as Beaconsfield told Lady Bradford, converted the visit into 'a regular function.' The Queen, accompanied by Princess Beatrice, came by special train to High Wycombe, where she was met, not only by Beaconsfield and Corry, but by the Mayor, who presented an address; and it was through cheering crowds and beflagged streets that she drove to Hughenden. At the house all was simple. No one was present but the Queen, the Princess, and two or three members of Her Majesty's Household in attendance; Beaconsfield had only his secretary to assist him. The Queen stayed a couple of hours, and she and the Princess took lunch with their host, each planting before their departure a tree on the south lawn. To no other Prime Minister during her long reign, except to Melbourne in 1841, did Her Majesty pay the honour of accepting his hospitality during his term of office.

To Queen Victoria.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Dec.* 16, 1877.—Lord Beaconsfield . . . hopes he may be permitted to take this occasion of offering to your Majesty his grateful, and heartfelt, thanks for the honor, which your Majesty conferred on him, yesterday, by deigning to visit his home: where your Majesty left a dream of dignified condescension and ever-graceful charm.

To Lady Bradford.

10, DOWNING STREET, *Dec.* 17.—I am here with another Cabinet, and another to-morrow at twelve! I can't conceal, and don't wish to conceal, from you, that affairs are most

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critical, and I have so much to do and think of, I really cannot write.

The visit of Saturday a great success: fine day, and with some gleams of sunshine. The Faery seemed to admire, and be interested in, everything, and has written to me a very pretty letter to that effect.

I have got to go to Windsor to-morrow 'to dine and sleep,' rather a tax in these busy times, and with my feeble health.

The Faery took away my statuette by Trentanova as a memorial of Hughenden. I had for the Princess the most beautiful *bonbonnière* you ever saw or fancied—just fresh from Paris. I cd. tell you many things to amuse you, but they must keep for more tranquil times.

Monday's Cabinet produced no agreement; and Beaconsfield, in pursuance of his fixed resolve to carry his policy through, announced that, in default of agreement, he should resign. This gave his colleagues pause, and they requested and obtained a day's reprieve.

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING ST., *Dec.* 17, '77.—. . . A stormy meeting of two hours and ¼. Nothing settled, the Cabinet having adjourned till to-morrow at twelve o'clock, after Lord Beaconsfield had announced that he should place his resignation in your Majesty's hands. It was then requested that they should adjourn until to-morrow. He thinks the three peers will retire, tho' the Lord Chancellor has hopes of Lord Salisbury. The Lord Chancellor is engaged to go down to Hatfield to-night, and will, therefore, have an opportunity of conferring with Lord Salisbury alone.

The conspirators had got hold of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Mr. Smith, in Lord Beaconsfield's absence, and had influenced them both, but Lord Beaconsfield feels little doubt, that he shall put all right in those quarters.

What broke up the Cabinet was not so much the 3 propositions of Lord Beaconsfield, viz., (1) To call Parliament together immediately, (2) To vote considerable increase of forces, and (3) To negotiate alone between the belligerents, but rather the startling truth, that became revealed in the discussion, that not one of the three peers ever really intended either to resist Russia, or to assist Turkey. . . .

The Queen, failing entirely to grasp her Minister's resolve, was startled at the suggestion that he might

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resign. She could understand the resignation of his three dissentient colleagues; but his own! 'Under any circumstances,' she wrote, 'the Queen would never accept Lord Beaconsfield's resignation which he says he said he would tender to her, but which she hopes is not in earnest. That the Queen will not accept.' Beaconsfield explained.

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING ST., *Dec.* 17, '77.—. . . He is sorry to have caused your Majesty any unnecessary anxiety, when your Majesty has unhappily so much.

He thought he expressed an usual, and constitutional, practice when he found half his Cabinet at that moment arrayed against him, in saying that if not supported he should feel it his duty to resign to your Majesty the trust, which your Majesty had, so graciously, bestowed on him. But that would not prevent your Majesty, if your Majesty graciously thought fit to entrust to him the formation of a new ministry, and certainly, in that case, he would do his utmost to form one. . . .

Night brought reflection and appeasement. Derby showed next morning a great reluctance to push differences to extremes; Cairns returned from Hatfield with a favourable report of Salisbury's disposition. Indeed, from this moment Salisbury, who felt that a testing time was approaching for British statesmen, began to range himself more and more by Beaconsfield's side. The Minister could report after the Cabinet to his Sovereign that his policy had prevailed without provoking any resignation. The only change made was one of date. Beaconsfield had suggested January 7 for the meeting of Parliament; it was fixed for January 17.

From Lord Derby.

FOREIGN OFFICE, *Dec.* 17 [? 18].—I will call on you a little after eleven, and happy indeed I shall be if we can see our way out of this mess. We all want to keep together: and no one in the Cabinet will feel as I shall if circumstances separate me from my old friend and teacher in public life.

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To Queen Victoria.

MEMORANDUM OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET, TUESDAY, DEC. 18.

On the preceding day, the Cabinet was about to close by the virtual resignation of three ministers, and the announcement of the Prime Minister that he should lay before the Queen his inability to carry on Her Majesty's affairs with his present colleagues and to ask Her Majesty's commands in consequence, when the Lord Chancellor requested that the Cabinet should adjourn until the next day at noon.

Lord Beaconsfield conferred with the Lord Chancellor after the Cabinet.

On Tuesday morning Lord Derby called on the P. Minister at 11 o'clock, an hour before the Cabinet met, and, to the great surprise of Lord Beaconsfield, expressed his deep regret at the dissolution of your Majesty's Government, and asked, whether there was no *modus vivendi* possible. Lord Beaconsfield said no compromise was possible. Lord Derby then sketched his view how the *modus vivendi* might be secured.

That he would agree to earlier meeting of Parliament, say 24 January; and some increase of force; but, under no circumstances, any attempt at mediation, which must fail.

Lord Beaconsfield held out no hope of accepting this plan, but Lord Derby, with many expressions of regard, said he should offer it to the consideration of his colleagues before an absolute rupture was decided on.

In the meantime, the Lord Chancellor arrived from Hatfield, and reported Lord Salisbury as very amenable and said that he had drawn up three resolutions, which embodied Lord Beaconsfield's proposals, and that he had no doubt Lord Salisbury would accept them.

The Cabinet met: the Lord Chancellor brought forward his resolutions: Lord Derby introduced his *modus vivendi:* Lord Salisbury answered Lord Derby and said that, if anything was done, he preferred the proposals of the Prime Minister, as more effective.

There was a general assent to these views.

Lord Derby said he would not contend with the unanimous opinion of the Cabinet, when the contest was only a question of degree. Then Lord Carnarvon, who had hitherto been silent, screamed out that, altho' he accepted these resolutions, he begged it to be understood that their acceptance, on his part, involved no assent to any expedition to any part of the Turkish Empire or any alliance with the Porte.

The Prime Minister replied, that no such question was now before the Cabinet; what they wanted now was to secure

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sufficient forces for the Queen; what was to be done with those increased forces depended on the circumstances which we should have to meet; at present he held the Cabinet unanimous in adopting his measures and he should report the three resolutions accordingly to the Queen.

He omitted to mention, that the Lord Chancellor and Lord Salisbury were very strong on the expediency of accompanying announcement of the meeting of Parliament with a direct communication to Russia as to mediation between the belligerents. And the Lord Chancellor sketched the form of such a despatch. Lord Derby strongly opposed but ultimately accepted this.

10, DOWNING ST. *Dec.* 19, '77.—. . . The Cabinet to-day was subdued, and chiefly considered domestic affairs, but also considered the Russian despatch, of which he believes your Majesty will have a copy, for your Majesty's approbation, this evening.

All this is another proof of what may be done when the Sovereign and the Minister act together.

Witness the Public Worship Act. Witness your Majesty's Imperial Crown. . . .

To Lady Bradford.

Most Private. 10, DOWNING STREET, *Dec.* 19.—The great struggle is over, and I have triumphed.

On Monday night there was virtually no Government, but on Tuesday the recusants fell upon their knees, and surrendered at discretion.

Parliament is to meet 17th next month. There is to be a large increase of force, and England is to mediate directly betn. the belligerents.

I was at Windsor yesterday, and sate at dinner next to the Faery, who is delighted with all that has happened.

I have been talking and writing now for several days without interruption; therefore you must excuse this brief and hurried line.

The following letters give us a picture of a statesman's Christmas, as it might have been, and as it was.

To Lady Newport.[1]

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Dec.* 13, '77.—There is no one I should like so much to pass my Xmas with as you and yours—but alas! that cannot be.

The state of affairs is so urgent and critical, that I doubt

[1] Now the Countess Dowager of Bradford.

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very much, whether I shall be able to remain even here. Probably my sarcastically 'merrie' Xmas will be passed in London.

It is a great disappointment to me, for I should like very much to have seen B[1] and M,[2] who must by this time have forgotten me. Laddo[3] has an advantage over them in that respect, for we met recently at a country house. But I want to make the acquaintance of those he describes as his 'little sisters.' It is time.

To Lady Bradford.

10, DOWNING STREET, *Dec.* 23.—Here we are with all the business in the world to be transacted, and everybody away. Even Derby must go down to his home at 5.30. I believe Knowsley is held by the tenure of its lord eating roast turkey on Xmas Day on the spot. Fortunately Monty is here, whom I am obliged to send about to Ambassadors and make write to Ministers of State.

I was at Windsor yesterday, and the Faery will remain there for a week: at least, till Friday. I have got to go down there again, and, I fear, more than once. All is well as long as I can keep to my room, or a morning walk, but toilette, and evening mannerisms, destroy me.

The J[ohn] M[anner]s asked me to dine with them on Xmas Day. It is impossible; but having the largest pineapple sent to me yesterday, I forwarded it, with my refusal, to Janetta[4]—a golden apple of the Hesperides. I hope it will stop their mouths from abusing me for not going.

I suppose you know Bretby is in town, and I will call there this afternoon, tho' I am really quite incapable of conversation, and wish most ardently the world would leave me alone to my business wh. is hard eno'. I want nothing else except letters from you.

Xmas Day.—I wear my new muffetees to-day, wh. I believe is etiquette, tho' I discard, for a moment, another pair, which served me pleasantly, tho' they have not been with me very long. I change my colors according to the season, like a ritualist priest. . . .

The 3rd vol. of the Prince's *Life* is one of the most interesting and one of the most important works that has appeared for a long time. Its predecessors did not, and could not, prepare us for anything so striking and so excellent. All the incidents and characters are great, and wonderfully appo-

[1] Now Lady Beatrice Pretyman.
[2] Now Duchess of Buccleuch.
[3] Now Earl of Bradford.
[4] Lady John Manners, afterwards Duchess of Rutland.

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site to the present hour. I am delighted that you delight in it. . . . The main subject of course at this moment is invested with peculiar interest, but the book has charms irrespective of the main subject. . . .

To-morrow I go to Windsor, and remain till the next day, when I come up to a Cabinet. . . .

Dec. 28.—Yesterday was a hard day. Had to get up at 7 o'ck. at Windsor—dark and cold: was at D.S. by ten—many interviews, and then a long Cabinet, and then writing to the Faery—so it was quite impossible to write to some one else. . . .

As you want to know something about Peace and War, you will be glad to hear that the Sultan has solicited our kind offices for peace with Russia, and that H.M.'s Government have accepted the trust.

God knows what will happen, but it is a good answer to that vain maniac Shaftesbury, and your simple friend Westminster, who, at the instigation of Gladstone, are getting up an agitation against the Government because it is going to war.

If Russia refuses, it will put her still more in the wrong, and if the weather on the Danube be as damnable as it is at St. James's, perhaps Russia will be prudent and reasonable. . . .

In the circle (in the corridor) the three Princesses,[1] who were grouped together, sent for me, on the plea that I was standing in a draught, etc. They wanted a little amusement. When I came up to them I said, 'Three goddesses—to wh. am I to give the golden apple?' . . .

Dec. 29.—. . . The announcement of the application of the Porte makes a great sensation.

The meeting of Parlt. was the 1st Act in the Drama. This is the second. What will be the 3rd?

Beaconsfield saw with satisfaction, as December wore on, that Salisbury was beginning to realise that, in the Eastern Question, he had more in common with his chief than with Derby or with Carnarvon. One factor in bringing the two men together was the sympathetic indignation they felt over the leakage of Cabinet secrets which marked the year 1877. Cabinet decisions—or indecisions—were, it was discovered from Colonel Wellesley's reports and from other sources, immediately and regularly reported by Schouvaloff, the Russian Am-

[1] Princesses Helena, Louise, and Beatrice.

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bassador, to his government. At the end of December Beaconsfield sent Salisbury a letter from Wellesley showing the mischief that was being done; and at the same time distinguished him from amongst his colleagues by taking him into his confidence over the secret message to the Tsar.

To Lord Salisbury.

Very Private. [? *Dec.* 25, 1877.]—I enclose you a letter which I have not shown to any of my colleagues and probably never shall, but which requires and deserves your deep attention.

When Col. W. last left England and had his final interview with me, I advised him to impress upon the Emperor that England was unwilling to depart from its neutrality, that it wished to assist in bringing about a settlement honorable and fairly advantageous to Russia, but that I could not conceal from myself that if the Emperor was obliged to enter into a second campaign it would be difficult for England to rest in her present inertness. The Emperor accepted this statement with confidence, and in the conciliatory spirit in which it was conceived: and he acted on it.

I have myself been convinced, both from thought and information, that a firm front shown by England would terminate the war without material injury to our interests. I think I could persuade you of this, but I will not dwell upon the matter here. What I wish to show you is that if the present system of the Cabinet is persisted in, and every resolution of every council is regularly reported by Count S[chouvaloff], it seems inevitable that our very endeavors to secure peace will land us in the reverse.

I have endeavoured to arrest this evil by some remarks I made in Cabinet. . . . But more decisive means are requisite.

We must put an end to all this gossip about war parties and peace parties in the Cabinet, and we must come to decisions which may be, and will be, betrayed, but which may convince Russia that we are agreed and determined. You and I must go together into the depth of the affair and settle what we are prepared to do. I dare say we shall not differ when we talk the matter over together as becomes public men with so great a responsibility: but unless we make an effort to clear ourselves from the Canidian spells which are environing us, we shall make shipwreck of alike our own reputations and the interests of our country.

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Salisbury, in his reply, still manifested his great repugnance to any step which might involve us in war with Russia; and the reasons he gave were certainly such as to demand grave consideration.

From Lord Salisbury.

India Office, *Dec.* 26, '77.—I return the enclosed most interesting and disquieting letter, with many thanks.

I sympathise fully in the solicitude this information causes you. Throughout the last anxious year, the apparent ease with which a knowledge of our councils has leaked out has placed us at a constant disadvantage. I hardly see in what way you, or the Cabinet as a body, can do anything to check the evil. It is a question of honour for each member of the Cabinet individually; but the public mischief of any such breach of our implied engagement as that to which you refer is enormous.

I do not think Wellesley's advice 'to fight Russia now' is sound. She is exhausted in the sense that she cannot go on fighting without great sacrifices. But she is not so exhausted as to be unable to make head against any great national danger—such as a war with England. Nor would the Turks be of any great value as allies. Enrolled as troops under our officers they would fight admirably: but such an arrangement on an extensive scale will never be permitted, so long as the Turkish Government retains a shadow of independence. Under their own officers, they would be of little use. I see therefore no reason for agreeing with Wellesley that this is a good moment for seeking to bring on the inevitable collision with Russia, if it be inevitable.

And there are particular circumstances in our own case that make it unsuitable. Owing to financial difficulties our Indian Army is in a less efficient state than will probably be the case some years hence: and the position of Cabul is a difficulty. Our English Army has not had time to accumulate reserves under Cardwell's system. Our manufacturing industries are depressed: and profoundly averse to war. And, owing to the peculiar condition of the Continent, Austria, our natural ally in such a question, has been seduced from us, at least for the moment.

The national feeling here, though strongly partial to the Turk, shrinks from war; and I think with a true instinct. Of course, it is possible that events may take such a turn as to force us into war ultimately: but it will be unpopular, and unprofitable. . . .

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To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING ST., *Jan.* 2, '78.— . . . Cabinet resolved to reply to the Russian message. Substance of that reply; that Turkey had never asked for an armistice; nevertheless, if Russia deemed an armistice indispensable to the commencement of negotiations for peace, England would convey the wish of Russia to Turkey: at the same time remarking, that the armistice should be settled by the two Governments, not by the commanders of forces in the field. Military men decide on truces, not on armistices. The exchange of prisoners, the surrender of a post, are fit subjects for truces, but when we have to decide on the affairs of Empires—on a state of conditions both in Europe and Asia, there were political considerations involved which Cabinets could alone decide.

This must be answered and will keep the negotiations going, and accustom Courts, and people in general, to the idea of peace. After this, we discussed the amount of the vote, and the manner it should be raised, and then Lord Salisbury raised the question, What we should say we were going to do with the money? Hereupon a discussion took place, which was highly satisfactory. Even Lord Carnarvon did not cavil. And Lord Salisbury got into an argument as to the respective advantages of occupying Gallipoli or Constantinople.

On the whole well pleased, but so tired, having been at ceaseless work all day, that he must apologise for this ungainly and imperfect note. He is not without hope of making some arrangement with the Irish Members. They are Anti-Russian, and pleased with the release of some Fenian prisoners. Will write more at another time—but a good chance.

The situation with which the Cabinet had to deal at the end of 1877 and the beginning of 1878 was full of difficulty. The Russians, having cleared out of their way the obstacle of Plevna, had taken Sofia and were steadily advancing on Constantinople; they claimed, as the masters of victorious troops, the full right of action, and showed no disposition to accept the offer of mediation, made by the British Government. The Turks, on the other hand, first applied to the Powers in general to intervene on their behalf, and then, being met by an ostentatious refusal on the part of Germany, appealed especially to England. It was obviously an extremely delicate situation and one in which Ministers, if they

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committed themselves to any public utterance, ought to measure their words. But one Cabinet Minister, whose attitude on the Eastern Question had from the first caused Beaconsfield grave uneasiness, had no doubts; and on his way to the Cabinet of January 2, just described, 'without seeing a single colleague,' as his chief wrote to Lady Chesterfield, made a speech which had a lamentable effect. Replying to a deputation of South African merchants, Carnarvon expressed his total dissent from the idea that Russia's rejection of our peace overtures conveyed 'any affront or insult' to England. He hoped we should not 'lash ourselves up into a nervous apprehension for so-called British honour and British interests.' Nobody, he added, in this country was 'insane enough to desire a repetition' of the Crimean War.

Beaconsfield had long resented Carnarvon's dissentient attitude in Cabinet, and he condemned the speech very plainly next day, making no secret of his indifference whether his colleague went or stayed.

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING STREET, *Jan.* 3, '78.—. . . Lord Beaconsfield felt it his duty to commence the proceedings of the Cabinet to-day by calling its attention to the speech of Lord Carnarvon, made yesterday to a deputation of the S. African merchants, and which might have proceeded from Mr. Gladstone. Lord Carnarvon attempted but feebly to justify every expression he had used, and ended by saying that, after the grave censure of the Prime Minister, he must consider, whether he could continue his connection with the Administration.

There was a silence; then the Lord Chancellor, in a conciliatory spirit, regretted the speech of Lord Carnarvon.

Lord Derby trusted he would not retire at this moment, as a false interpretation would be placed on his conduct, and that no one was justified in retiring in the midst of negotiations, except on a strong ground, and clear principle.

Lord Salisbury vindicated his friend on every head, especially in thinking the Crimean War 'an insane policy.' He spoke very warmly and incisively. Lord John Manners answered him with great spirit, showing that this speech was a continuation of the same system, which had dictated the telegram of

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Count Schouvaloff to the Emperor, mentioned by Wellesley, and that it was one entirely encouraging to Russia in all her designs. Mr. Secretary Hardy spoke shortly, but well. The Chancellor of the Exchequer more at length, and in a most satisfactory manner.

Lord Derby made another effort to obtain from Lord Carnarvon, that he would not persist in his withdrawal. This was not encouraged by the Prime Minister, and the matter dropped. The Cabinet then considered, and settled, the armistice reply to Prince Gortchakoff, which was telegraphed this afternoon, and then Lord Carnarvon had to rise and leave the Cabinet for Osborne. . . .

To Lady Bradford.

10, DOWNING STREET, *Jan.* 3, 1878.—Grateful to you for yr. letter wh. I did not deserve from my silence; but Cabinets every day, unceasing labor otherwise, and much anxiety really prevent one—I shd. say disqualify one—from doing anything so agreeable as to communicate with you.

Carnarvon, when I thought all was right, has made a terrible escapade, a speech worthy of Gladstone. . . .

He has gone to-day, after the Cabinet, to Osborne. I don't envy him his audience. It is some time since he has been at Court, the Queen being greatly offended with him, and I asked H.M., as a personal favor to myself, to invite him! Alas! he is in the hands of Lyddon and Froude! and consults them on all occasions and on all matters. . . .

I have been obliged to speak my mind to him at last, and do not know whether I shall meet him again as a colleague, and do not much care. . . .

Jan. 6.—Nothing is yet settled: all confused and perplexing. But, as there is a Cabinet to-morrow, it is impossible that the decision shd. be delayed.

Tho' all his colleagues think his conduct indefensible, and calculated to produce the utmost evil, nearly all of them are on their knees to him not to resign. They fear further ruptures, and think, with cause, that only one interpretation can be placed on such an incident—that we are going at once to war with Russia! At this moment, Parliament on the eve of meeting, there wd. be of course the most factious agitation in the country, and instead of being welcomed by the H. of C., carrying our measures, and securing peace, we shd. probably be defeated or weakly supported, and have to dissolve Parliament! . . .

Jan. 7.—I have not a moment, but you will like to know, that all is well arranged. The Cabinet remains unbroken,

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and can show a front at this critical time. The mischief done cannot be recalled, but a break-up on the eve of Parlt. wd. have been perilous and perhaps fatal. . . .

The Queen expressed herself very strongly to Carnarvon, both in speech and in writing; and Salisbury, whose defence of his friend in Cabinet sprang from chivalry, and not from approval, did his best to persuade him to reasonableness. 'Except brave John Manners and haughty Sir Michael,' wrote the Prime Minister to the Queen, 'Lord Beaconsfield believes all his colleagues are on their knees to Lord Carnarvon to stay. The Cabinet wants a little of your Majesty's fire.' The difficulty was accordingly patched up for the moment.

To Queen Victoria.

10, Downing St., *Jan.* 7, '78.—. . . On the opening of the Cabinet this morning, Lord Carnarvon made some graceful, slightly conciliatory remarks on the scene which occurred at the last meeting; and, then, he asked leave to read a paper which he had drawn up, so that his views might not be misunderstood in the future.

When he had finished, Prime Minister said, that Lord Carnarvon had not withdrawn from his colleagues, for two reasons. 1st, That in the present critical state of affairs, his secession might be injurious to the Queen's service: 2nd, that we appreciated a colleague, whose administration of his office had added to the reputation of Her Majesty's Government: but that Lord Beaconsfield could not now enter into any criticism or controversy on the points contained in a carefully prepared paper, but that, if Lord Carnarvon furnished him with a copy he would, of course, consider it, and in a friendly spirit.

There the matter ended with a sympathetic murmur from all, and with some incoherent but well-meant expressions from Lord Derby. Then the reply to Prince Gortchakoff was settled, and sent to your Majesty for approval.

Then, after some feeble opposition from Lord Derby, the Cabinet resolved on the amount of the vote of credit, viz., five millions.

Lord Beaconsfield very much thanks your Majesty for the copies of the Carnarvon correspondence. He thought your Majesty's letter admirable, and he has no doubt it influenced the person to whom it was addressed. . . .

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This Carnarvon incident was only one of many difficulties in the Cabinet, which were not finally overcome till the end of March. 'Cabinets every day, and unceasing anxiety and toil,' wrote Beaconsfield to Lady Bradford on January 14; 'the confusion is so great that it seems the end of the world' was his despairing wail three days later; to Lady Chesterfield on January 22 he wrote, 'The Cabinet really sits *en permanence*.' In reading Beaconsfield's letters to the Queen describing the deliberations over which he presided we should, however, make some allowance for his artistic and impressionable temperament, prone to exaggerate both failures and successes.

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING ST., *Jan.* 9, '78.—. . . The draft of your Majesty's speech was submitted to the Cabinet this day, having been in their hands for four and twenty hours previously.

Lord Derby attacked it in every way, in a very elaborate address. He said it was a menace to Russia. Lord Salisbury followed in the same vein. To the consternation, but concealed consternation, of the Prime Minister, the Lord Chancellor too much agreed with them. Mr. Secretary Cross gave a faint note and dwelt on the depression of trade, and the fearful decline in the revenue, which was continuous.

Mr. Secretary Hardy touched only on some technical military points, but gave no assistance on the great issues. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was able and true.

Lord Derby then proposed that the draft should be withdrawn and another prepared.

Lord Carnarvon supported him. They receded from all the engagements, which they had accepted three weeks or so ago.

It was, then, necessary for the Prime Minister to make a great effort, and to say, that, late as it was, he would not meet Parliament unless they were prepared to fulfil their engagements. Why had they agreed to call Parliament together? Why was it meeting?

A sharp half hour, but, ultimately, they adopted the speech, exchanging words, but still adhering to the three great points: 1. Negotiations for peace, 2. Meeting of Parliament, 3. Increase of Armaments.

Lord Beaconsfield will not be able to get a becoming copy of the Speech for your Majesty's consideration and sanction,

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by this post. He will send it to-morrow with his original draft. He was nearly alone in the Cabinet, Lord John Manners and Chancellor of the Exchequer alone really supporting him. It is evident, that, besides the opposition we have always had to encounter from the Russian party in the Cabinet, Lord Beaconsfield's colleagues generally are much affected by the depressed state of trade and the great fall in the revenue last week, the commencement of a quarter in which it was hoped it would rally. It only shows, we ought to have met Parliament on the 7th of this month, as Lord Beaconsfield originally proposed. He doubts whether, if the resolutions he brought forward some few weeks ago were now recommended to his colleagues, they would adopt them. They take a dark view of the condition and prospects of the country. But they cannot now recede.

From Queen Victoria.

OSBORNE, *Jan.* 10, '78.—The Queen is really distressed at the low tone which this country is inclined to hold. She thinks every opportunity ought to be taken and every effort made to show them that the Empire and even their low sordid love of gain will suffer permanently and most seriously if this goes on. The country should be frightened as to the results. Could not Lord Beaconsfield get something to be written, tho' the *Daily Telegraph*, *Pall Mall* and *Post* are very strong in the right sense, to instruct the blinded country in this respect? She feels she cannot, as she before said, remain the Sovereign of a country that is letting itself down to kiss the feet of the great barbarians, the retarders of all liberty and civilisation that exists. Her son feels more strongly than herself even. She is utterly ashamed of the Cabinet, but delighted to see and hear Sir Stafford is so right and sound. . . . Be firm and you will rally your party round you. The Queen means to speak very strongly to Count Beust. It can do no harm; it may do good. Oh, if the Queen were a man, she would like to go and give those Russians, whose word one cannot believe, such a beating! We shall never be friends again till we have it out. This the Queen feels sure of.

The Queen is so grieved at these constant annoyances to which Lord Beaconsfield is exposed and at the trouble which yesterday's Cabinet caused him, which he so well describes in the letter received to-day, for which she thanks him very much. Lord Derby is the real misfortune; another Foreign Secretary, who felt as he ought, would support the Prime Minister, [and] would carry the others with him. . . .

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'It is something to serve such a Sovereign!' wrote Beaconsfield on receipt of this 'spirited' letter. He, no less than the Queen, felt that, in view of the rapid advance of Russian troops in Thrace,[1] some definite step in the nature of armed precaution must be taken on the spot; and he summoned the Cabinet on January 12 to decide whether, considering Layard's despatches, the time had not come for England to occupy the Dardanelles. Her Majesty wrote a memorandum to impress on the Cabinet the importance of the occasion. The meeting was noteworthy, as Salisbury then, for the first time, took a lead among his colleagues in support of his chief's policy.

Memorandum by Queen Victoria.

OSBORNE, *Jan.* 11, '78.—The state of the Eastern Question has become most serious and events are following each other with such rapidity and developing such fearful proportions, that what was decided even two or three days ago seems no longer of much avail.

The news of the surrender of the Turkish Army at Shipka yesterday and of the intention not to defend Adrianople to-day show that Constantinople may be attacked very soon, and if there is a panic, *not* defended!!

We must therefore stand by what we have always declared, viz., that any advance on Constantinople would free us from our position of neutrality. Were these mere empty words? If so, England must abdicate her position and retire from having any longer any voice in the Councils of Europe and sink down to a third-rate power!

But the Queen feels sure that there is not one amongst her Ministers who, whatever their individual feelings for Turkey and against war may be, would wish us not to support the honour and dignity of Great Britain, and in that case she calls upon them to determine at once what means should instantly be taken to prevent Constantinople from being attacked, which we have repeatedly stated would be tantamount to a *casus belli*.

There is not a moment to be lost or the whole of our policy of centuries, of our honour as a great European Power, will have received an irreparable blow! The Queen has not a

[1] 'The Turks have lost another army—that of the Shipka Pass,' Beaconsfield told Lady Bradford on January 10; '40 battalions surrounded and surrendered! I think the curtain will now fall.'

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doubt what the feeling of the nation would be, if the real danger is known and explained.

The Queen wishes Lord Beaconsfield to read this to the Cabinet to-morrow.

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING ST., *Jan.* 12, '78.—. . . A Cabinet of three hours, most stormy. The proposition was to send fleet to the Dardanelles and forces to Boulair, if Sultan permitted. Lord Derby violently opposed the proposition. Ultimately Lord Salisbury proposed that Mr. Layard should be instructed to ask permission of the Sultan for 'the fleet to anchor in the Straits,' the language used by Mr. Layard; and that in reply to P. Gortchakoff's unanswered note on the subject of 'British Interests' and their more complete definition, the Prince should be requested to give an assurance to the English Government, that the Russians would not occupy Gallipoli.

After long reflection, and extreme stubbornness, Lord Derby rose from his seat, and said 'that he could not sanction any projects of the kind, and that he must retire from the ministry.' Lord Salisbury said then, that, if Lord Derby retired, he must retire too, as he felt the differences of opinion in the Cabinet were insurmountable; that the P. Minister, by his powers of conciliation, had kept them together for four years, but he felt it was hopeless; that he had only suggested the compromise to keep them, if possible, together at this moment, as he felt it would be disastrous to the Queen's service to break up now.

The Lord Chancellor asked Lord Derby what he proposed as an alternative answer to Mr. Layard, but as usual Lord Derby had nothing to propose. He opposes everything, proposes nothing. The P. Minister said that Lord Derby and those who agreed with him, ought to have retired three weeks ago, and not consented to the summoning of Parliament. By their remaining, but retiring now, they had deceived the Queen.

Lord Beaconsfield ought to have told your Majesty that the proceedings commenced by his reading your Majesty's letter. The whole of the Cabinet, with the exception of Lord Carnarvon, much supported the P. Minister.

Lord Derby at length accepted the proposal of Lord Salisbury, but Lord Carnarvon had the impertinence of violently protesting against it, even after that.

As the telegrams in discussion were most urgent, Lord Beaconsfield sanctioned their being sent from the Council-chamber, on the ground, that he was sufficiently acquainted,

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from hourly correspondence, with your Majesty's pleasure and opinions on the subject, to venture on that step. If he erred, he trusts humbly your Majesty will pardon him.

Layard's despatches were not the only appeals which reached England from Constantinople. On January 10 the Sultan telegraphed personally to the Queen, begging Her Majesty for her mediation with a view to arranging an armistice and the discussion of the preliminaries of peace. The Queen, accordingly, with the unanimous approval of the Cabinet—'almost the only occasion,' wrote Beaconsfield, 'on which they have been unanimous'—telegraphed to the Tsar on January 14, communicating the fact of the Sultan's appeal, and expressing the hope that Alexander, as one sincerely desirous of peace, would accelerate the negotiations. The Tsar must have resented this direct approach, as he replied next day with a message which the Queen and Beaconsfield not unnaturally found 'unsatisfactory,' 'rude,' and 'vulgar'; but which the Minister thought indicated that Russia was finding unexpected obstacles in her path.

The Emperor Alexander to Queen Victoria.

Your Majesty does me justice in saying that I desire peace, but I wish it to be serious and lasting. The Commanders-in-Chief of my armies in Europe and Asia know the conditions on which a suspension of hostilities can be granted.

The Emperor's reply was not calculated to reassure the Cabinet as to the intentions of the Russian ruler and his victorious Generals. Beaconsfield accordingly pressed forward in the Cabinet of Tuesday, January 15, the scheme of sending the fleet to the Dardanelles, though by the Cabinet of the following day, mainly in consequence of the Sultan's objections, the order was held in abeyance. Carnarvon tendered to Beaconsfield a provisional resignation, to take effect directly the order was sent; and Derby also, who at this critical time was laid up with illness, and unable to attend Cabinets, wrote from his sickbed, strongly protesting against the policy. 'More I think of

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the Dardanelles business, less I like it,' he wrote on January 15; and again next day, 'I cannot put too strongly the objections which I feel to the sending up of the fleet.' He forwarded a minute which was read at the Cabinet on January 16, and in which he summed up his objections in the sentence, 'I object to the proposed step as contrary to Treaty, as increasing the risk of collision with Russia, as tending to irritate rather than to conciliate, and as being, so far as I can judge, useless, if not dangerous, in a military point of view.'

Hardy's diary gives us succinct accounts of the varying decisions of these two Cabinets, and of the motives which inspired them. '*Jan.* 15.—We agreed to communications to Austria to draw closer to her, to Loftus to urge an answer about Gallipoli, to Austria as to association with us in entering the Dardanelles. Salisbury, worn out by Russian duplicity, was more eager than anyone for the last action.' '*Jan.* 16.—Beust's communications as to Austria, the Grand Vizier's to the fleet, backed by Layard—Russia's more than half promise not to go to Gallipoli—changed all our purposes of yesterday. Austria is shaky, but we must go with her as she urges.'

Beaconsfield was very impatient with Carnarvon and his provisional resignation.

From Lord Carnarvon.

16, Bruton St., *Jan.* 18, '78.—On Monday last, the 14th inst., I wrote to you requesting you to be good enough to submit my resignation to the Queen, as soon as the order for moving the fleet to the Dardanelles should be given. I afterwards received a message from you through Mr. M. Corry to the effect that subsequent telegrams had induced you to change your mind; and on attending the Cabinet on Tuesday, the following day—as I did to prevent any rumours which might be injurious to the Government arising—I understood that they, as well as you, saw reason to abandon the course which had been agreed upon.

I am very glad that so sound a decision has been come to—whatever the reasons on which it may have been founded—but looking to the fact that my resignation, though provisional, is in your hands, and to the serious nature of such a fact,

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I think it is my duty to state, in a manner which cannot be mistaken, what I conceive to be my present position.

When at the last Cabinet held I stated the course which I had taken in placing my provisional resignation in your hands, no opinion was expressed or comment made by you, or as far as I remember by any other member of the Cabinet; and therefore it is the more necessary that there should be no room for misapprehension as to my past or present action.

I have no desire to separate myself from colleagues with whom I have acted on terms of great personal regard and goodwill: I am sensible of the public inconvenience which would arise from discord or open difference of opinion at this moment; and I am ready now, as I hope I have been on former occasions, to modify or concede my views on points of detail, in order to secure a general harmony of action among the members of the Government.

But I have been led to consider carefully the events of the last few weeks and the divergences of opinion which have unfortunately developed themselves amongst us; and I cannot conceal from myself that those differences have been very considerable on a question, where it is of the utmost importance to the country that the Government should be one and undivided.

Taking therefore all this into account I avail myself of this opportunity to place clearly on paper the opinion—even though you and my colleagues are already familiar with it—that I am not prepared in present circumstances, or in circumstances similar to them, to agree to any armed intervention or any course of a similar nature. I see no reason as yet why the question at issue should pass out of the realm of diplomacy. Further, the vote of credit or the increase in Army and Navy estimates (whichever it may be) is a measure which I consider useful as a means of strengthening our diplomacy at this juncture; but I do not contemplate the application of any aid granted by Parliament to the purposes of a foreign expedition, unless circumstances should change in a manner and to a degree wholly beyond my present anticipations. The anxiety which I own to have felt on this subject has been greatly relieved by the explicit language of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in which he explained that the Government would not, until it was clear that the Russian conditions are unsatisfactory, make any proposals for the increase of armaments.

Relying therefore upon this as a trustworthy exposition of the views of the Government I feel that I may for the present content myself with the statement, which I have endeavoured to express as clearly as possible in reference to my own position.

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But it remains for you to consider whether this view, which is satisfactory to me, and on which my continuance in office depends, is also satisfactory to you and my colleagues. I shall be glad to hear from you at your convenience.

To Lord Carnarvon.

10, DOWNING STREET, *Jan.* 18, '78.—I cd. not answer your letter this morning, as my carriage was at the door, and I was obliged to keep an engagement.

You are in error in supposing that you wrote to me on Monday last, the 14th. It was on Tuesday, the 15th, that you wrote to me a letter wh. I received on Wednes[day], the 16th, just before the early meeting of the Cabinet.

As yr. letter was founded on assumed circ[umstanc]es wh. did not exist, or wh. had been removed, I thought it was only a friendly act—and it was in a spirit of thoro' comradeship I did it—to send to you a gent[leman] who possessed my entire confidence, and who was an intimate acquaintance of your own, to apprise you of this, and to beg you to consider the letter *non avenue*, and therefore not to mention the subject to our colleagues, already sufficiently harassed with such matters.

You took another course, wh. I regret, if only for the cause of its occasioning you to write so many letters and I to answer them.

There is no adequate cause for yr. tendering the resignation of yr. office at this moment, and I shd. be quite unable to inform the Queen what was the reason of yr. retirement. These are not times when statesmen shd. be too susceptible. We have enough to encounter without wasting our energies in contests among ourselves.

I shall not therefore submit yr. resignation to H.M. Such a step wd. deprive me of a colleague I value, and at any rate it shd. be reserved for a period when there is a very important difference of opinion between us, wh. at present does not seem to be the case.

While Cabinet councils were thus distracted, Ministers were forced to make declarations in the open by the meeting of Parliament on Thursday, January 17. The Queen's Speech, on the draft of which the Cabinet had found so much difficulty in agreeing, narrated the progress of Russia's victorious arms in Europe and Asia, the appeal of the Porte to England, and the fact that, through British

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mediation, Russia and Turkey were in communication as to peace. Then followed the critical paragraph.

Hitherto, so far as the war has proceeded, neither of the belligerents has infringed the conditions on which my neutrality is founded, and I willingly believe that both parties are desirous to respect them, so far as it may be in their power. So long as these conditions are not infringed, my attitude will continue the same. But I cannot conceal from myself that, should hostilities be unfortunately prolonged, some unexpected occurrence may render it incumbent on me to adopt measures of precaution. Such measures could not be taken without adequate preparation, and I trust to the liberality of my Parliament to supply the means which may be required for that purpose.

This warning was enforced by Beaconsfield in his peroration when he spoke in the debate on the Address. 'If we are called upon to vindicate our rights and to defend the interests of our country; if our present hopes and purposes of peace are baffled; if there be circumstances which demand that we should appeal to Parliament again and again for means to vindicate the honour of the realm, and to preserve and maintain the interests of the empire, I am sure that Her Majesty's Government will never hesitate to take that course.' But, in general, the Duke of Connaught's report of the speech to the Queen was well founded: 'When he sat down everybody was as wise as they were before and the Opposition were terribly nettled.' His main theme was to show how absurd was the lament of the Opposition about England's isolation and want of influence. Why, he pointed out, the only Power which had done anything was England. It was she who defeated the Berlin memorandum, who called the Constantinople Conference into existence, who obtained an armistice for Serbia, and who had interfered to bring about the present negotiation between Russia and Turkey. A peppery attack which Argyll made upon Beaconsfield gave Salisbury an opportunity, in Derby's absence from illness, to defend the policy of his chief. He challenged Parliament either to give its implicit

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confidence to the Government, and so enable it to act with force in these great issues, or to replace it.

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING STREET, *Jan.* 18, '78.—. . . It seems universally admitted, that last night in Parliament redounded much to the credit of your Majesty's Government. The debate in the Lords was well sustained, and its not least remarkable feature was the vigorous, loyal and uncompromising support given to the Prime Minister by Lord Salisbury.

The observations of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to which your Majesty refers, have attracted remark, but the general interpretation of them by the House of Commons and the country, is, that they were a challenge to Russia, that if the terms of peace were not such as England had a right to expect, we should be prepared to go to war with that Power, and this is the interpretation that Sir Stafford accepts!

The communications with Austria are constant, and promising, and Lord Tenterden informs Lord Beaconsfield that M. de Harcourt[1] intimated to-day, that France was disposed to move and apprise Russia, that the Danube and the Straits were European questions.

Lord Beaconsfield hopes that your Majesty may not suffer from all this anxiety, and absolute and extreme labor, which your Majesty undergoes. He wishes, often, he was at your Majesty's side to soothe and to aid and to be your Majesty's Secretary as well as your Minister. That cannot be, but let him hope that his distant devotion is not without solace, and, even tho' removed and apart, his humble energies may, in some degree, aid.

In the midst of this agitated time the Queen was anxious to follow up the mark of confidence in Beaconsfield which she had given in her December visit to Hughenden by a further striking act of favour. 'Let Lord Derby and Lord Carnarvon go, and be very firm,' she wrote on January 20, from Osborne. 'A divided Cabinet is of no use. The Queen would wish to confer the vacant Garter on Lord Beaconsfield as a mark of her confidence and support. She and the country at large have the greatest confidence in him.' But Beaconsfield felt at once that this was a very unsuitable moment for him to accept

[1] French Ambassador.

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honours and decorations. Besides, as he told Lady Bradford, he had Melbourne's reason for declining, that he did not want to bribe himself. Her Majesty thought her Minister's letter declining the honour 'a beautiful one—she almost expected it; but hopes to bestow it on some future occasion.'

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING ST., *Jan.* 21, '78.—He is deeply touched, almost overcome, by the gracious expression of your Majesty's wish to confer on him the high dignity of the Garter, and especially as a mark of your Majesty's confidence and support.

But with the profoundest deference he would venture to observe that this great distinction would only add to the jealousy and envy of which he is already the object and that it might be better to reserve it for some one on whom your Majesty could less depend than on himself, and whose support might add strength to your Majesty's Government.

There is no honor and no reward that with him can ever equal the possession of your Majesty's kind thoughts. All his own thoughts and feelings and duties and affections are now concentrated in your Majesty, and he desires nothing more for his remaining years than to serve your Majesty or, if that service ceases, to live still on its memory as a period of his existence most interesting and fascinating.

The Queen's gracious offer reached Beaconsfield on the morning of a day—Monday, January 21—when he had determined to put his authority to the test, and obtain his colleagues' assent to a definitely forward policy. For the first time during these troubles, there was a prospect for England of a serious ally in resisting Russian advance. Neither in the Reichstadt understanding of 1876, nor in the Vienna Treaty of 1877, had Austria carried her policy of hypothetical partition so far as to admit of Russian occupation of Constantinople and the Straits. She, like England, was at last gravely alarmed that this danger was imminent, and she seemed to be ready to join England in preventing it. Russia still concealed her terms while daily advancing her military position. Beaconsfield accordingly felt that the

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moment had come to burst the shackles that had bound his Cabinet, and in three sittings on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, the 21st, 22nd, and 23rd, he pressed for and obtained a decision.

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING ST., *Jan.* 21, '78.—Lord Beaconsfield . . . proposed to-day to the Cabinet that we should offer to Austria a defensive alliance with this country; if necessary, a pecuniary aid, provided she would mobilise a sufficient force upon her frontier, and join us in an identic note to Russia. Our fleet, of course, to go up to Constantinople.

The discussion was fiery. Ten members of the Cabinet warmly adopted the proposals, Lord Derby fiercely opposing them, and Lord Carnarvon feebly.

No one supported them with more energy than Lord Salisbury, whose conduct throughout was admirable.

Ultimately, Lord Derby agreed to the identic note, and a draft of it was drawn up and telegraphed to Vienna, and the Cabinet is to meet and decide to-morrow on the main question, at 2 o'clock, when we expect an answer from Sir [*sic*] Buchanan. Lord Beaconsfield will see Count Beust this evening, and has great hopes, that he shall be able to settle everything.

He shall not hesitate to undertake to His Excellency, that your Majesty's Government will adopt these measures, and if Lord Derby cannot approve them, he must at once resign.

The Austrian reply, which was of an indecisive character, came in time for the Council of Wednesday the 23rd; and Beaconsfield, recognising that important results must follow from the meeting, obtained that morning by telegram in advance the Queen's authority to accept resignations in order 'to prevent second thoughts.' Before six he reported to Her Majesty that the fleet had been ordered to proceed immediately to Constantinople; that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would give notice in the House of Commons of a Vote of Credit; and that the Cabinet was resolute, except Derby and Carnarvon, whose resignations he expected at once. His expectations were fulfilled in both cases. Derby's letter was manly and touching.

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From Lord Derby.

FOREIGN OFFICE, *Jan.* 23, 1878.

MY DEAR DISRAELI,—After our repeated discussions in Cabinet on the question of sending up the fleet to Constantinople, and the decision which was come to this afternoon, you will feel as I do that only one result is possible so far as I am concerned.

The question on which we were unable to agree is obviously one of grave importance; it is certain to be eagerly and frequently discussed both in and out of Parliament; the Foreign Secretary more than any other Minister would in the ordinary course of things be charged with the duty of defending the decision taken; and as I cannot think it, or say that I think it, a safe or wise one, it is clear that no alternative is left me except to ask you to allow me to retire from the post I hold.

I deeply and sincerely regret that we should differ on any point of policy; but two considerations reconcile me in some measure to a step which is quite as painful to me personally as it can be to you. You will get on better with a thoroughly harmonious Cabinet; and you are so strong in the Lords that the loss of two colleagues will not practically affect you there. I may add that the incessant anxiety of the last two years has made me often doubt of late—all questions of political difference set aside—whether I should long be capable of even moderately efficient service in an office which at times like these admits of no rest from responsibility and labour.

It is needless to say that whatever I can do, out of office, to support your Government will be done by me, both as an obligation of public duty and from feelings of private friendship which no lapse of time or change of circumstances will alter. Believe me always most sincerely yrs., DERBY.

Beaconsfield immediately obtained the Queen's permission to offer the succession to the Foreign Office to Salisbury, whose thoroughgoing adhesion to his chief's policy had been a marked feature of recent Cabinets; and Hicks Beach, who had been a stalwart throughout, became Colonial Secretary. The orders were sent to the fleet to enter the Dardanelles, and Layard was instructed to inform the Sultan, and secure that the forts did not fire on the ships. Northcote duly notified the House of Commons of a Vote of Credit to be moved on the following Monday. Beaconsfield felt he could now go full steam ahead; and his Royal Mistress was immensely satisfied and relieved.

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To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING ST., *Jan.* 24.—Lord Beaconsfield . . . encloses letters received this morning from Lord Carnarvon and Lord Derby. It is the policy of Lord Salisbury that they oppose. Until Lord Salisbury was permanently detached from these noble Lords, it was impossible to bring the Cabinet to any firm or general decision. Directly Lord Salisbury declared, which he did in a most uncompromising view, against Russian aggression, the Cabinet divided ten to twelve in favor of a decided policy. Lord Salisbury is most firmly anti-Russian. His experience in the India Office has taught him this. His diplomatic promenade last year in Europe has given him personal acquaintance with all its leading statesmen. He is a man of commanding ability and station and Lord Beaconsfield thoroughly believes that your Majesty will find in him a most efficient, devoted and agreeable Minister. He therefore earnestly prays your Majesty to appoint him Secretary of State. It will show that your Majesty's Government is determined.

Lord Beaconsfield is touched by Lord Derby's letter. It closes a public connection of a quarter of a century, softened too by much private intimacy. Lord Salisbury also is detached from his intimate friend.

These are trials of public life, but everything must yield to duty, especially at an imperial crisis like the present.

He begs your Majesty to have the kindness to telegraph permission to the two retiring Ministers to make their parliamentary statements to-morrow.

He thanks your Majesty for your Majesty's gracious messages and enquiries. He is glad to say he is fairly well, but the tension of the present moment is extreme, and the thought and labor are unceasing. He would willingly write more, but he must now hurry down to the House of Lords, and has been the whole morning in conference and consultation.

From Queen Victoria.

OSBORNE, *Jan.* 24, '78.—The Queen must write a few lines to Lord Beaconsfield, to express her immense satisfaction and relief at the intelligence conveyed in his two cyphers. To the last, she feared Lord Derby would stay and she really believes that next to the agitation and behaviour of the Opposition, he has been the chief obstacle to all action and moreover has tried Lord Beaconsfield dreadfully, and often paralysed the whole Government, in the most lamentable way. His inaction and delay on every occasion and total want of energy

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and purpose, have been such that, irrespective of this question, he had become totally unfit to be Foreign Secretary.

What has led to this, at the last, after the scenes which Lord Beaconsfield described? The announcement in the House of Commons is also most important.

In short the Queen cannot sufficiently thank her wise and kind Prime Minister, for the firmness and energy displayed, which will yet carry us on to where we should be.

Under these circumstances, Lord Salisbury is no doubt an excellent appointment and his great ability and readiness as a speaker will make him invaluable as Foreign Secretary. She wonders whom he will submit as Secretary for the Colonies.

The Queen trusts Lord Beaconsfield will not be the worse for all this excitement and anxiety. . . .

These resignations and Lord Salisbury's appointment with other strong measures will have an immense effect in Russia.

The satisfaction and relief of Queen and Minister were premature. Carnarvon's resignation was indeed final; but, after a few days' uncertainty and confusion, Derby, at Beaconsfield's request and with Her Majesty's reluctant acquiescence, resumed the seals of the Foreign Office, which he held for a couple of months longer. It is a curious story. On Thursday, January 24, the day after the decisive Cabinet, when the orders to the fleet had only just been despatched, there came a telegram from Layard announcing that the terms or bases of peace had been agreed to, and that the last of them was that the question of the Straits should be settled between 'the Congress and the Emperor of Russia.' Northcote has given us, in his memorandum, a vivacious account of the way in which this news affected Ministers.

This fell amongst us like a bombshell. Our justification for sending up the fleet was that we feared that a private arrangement would be made about the Straits between the Turks and Russians, to the exclusion and the detriment of other Powers; and here were the Russian terms of peace, by which this question was to be reserved to be settled by a Congress! What could we say to justify ourselves? And how much would not the difficulty of the situation be increased by the emphatic dissent and resignation of Lord Derby? After a little hasty consultation with those of our colleagues who were in the House of Commons, I went up to Downing

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Street, taking Smith[1] with me. We found Lord Beaconsfield in bed, but quite able to talk the matter over with us. The result was that we agreed to stop Admiral Hornby before he entered the Dardanelles, where he had been led to expect that he might find orders. Smith despatched an Admiralty telegram at once. It was not in time to stop the fleet, but it brought it back again to the entrance of the Straits. Looking back, I think this was the greatest mistake we made in the whole business; but at the moment we were all agreed on it. The next day came a correction of the telegram; it was not between the Emperor and the Congress that the question of the Straits was to be settled, but between the Emperor and the Sultan! How we gnashed our teeth!

The original impression of the moderation of Russia's terms, which Ministers derived from the mistake in Layard's telegram, was confirmed on the Friday morning by a minimising statement of them which Schouvaloff—'no doubt,' wrote Beaconsfield, 'in consequence of the Parliamentary movements of yesterday'—handed to Derby. They were considered by the 'Council of Ten,' as Beaconsfield called the Cabinet minus Derby and Carnarvon, and were thought more studious of British than of Austrian interests; but Ministers naturally determined to proceed with the Vote of Credit as a measure of precaution. Then came Layard's correcting telegram, which caused the Queen to telegraph at once to her Prime Minister, 'Do not you agree with me in thinking it highly desirable that the fleet should still be sent to Constantinople, else we are sure to be duped, which would be fatal?'

But it would hardly have been dignified to send the fleet a third order within twenty-four hours, countermanding the second order and restoring the first. Moreover, the firm attitude of the Ministry in announcing an immediate Vote of Credit had already abated Russian pretensions, and made her produce her terms of peace. The movement of the fleet might perhaps wait for the developments of the next few days; especially as the mere rumour, as yet unconfirmed, of Derby's resignation had produced serious domestic difficulties for the Government which

[1] First Lord of the Admiralty.

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it is strange that Beaconsfield and his colleagues had not foreseen and allowed for. Not only was the head of the house of Stanley a name to conjure with in his native Lancashire, a county which had made a marvellous rally to Conservatism in recent years. But also, throughout the middle classes and in the eyes of the plain man, Derby stood for prudence and commonsense in politics;[1] and the Whips represented to Beaconsfield and Northcote that his defection would shake the confidence of the country and of the party in the soundness of Ministerial policy, and would certainly diminish, and might even imperil, the Government majority on the coming Vote of Credit. Almost the whole of the Ministry, with Northcote and Cairns at their head, pressed these views upon Beaconsfield, who had no choice but to yield to them. It was pointed out that the recall of the order to the fleet gave an obvious opening for accommodation. Carnarvon had resigned because he opposed both the movement of the fleet and the immediate Vote of Credit. Derby had based his resignation on the movement of the fleet alone; and he had left himself a loophole that very Friday afternoon, by abstaining at Beaconsfield's request from any announcement, when Carnarvon gave the House of Lords the detailed story of his own disagreements with his colleagues in the past three weeks. Beaconsfield, when questioned by Granville on the current rumours of Derby's action, could only say that he 'always thought it a high, valuable and ancient privilege of anyone retiring from a Government that he should announce the fact to Parliament himself in the first instance.'

Convinced though he was that Derby's return was in the circumstances desirable, Beaconsfield did not feel that, after the increasing friction of the last eight or nine months, he could make a personal appeal to his old friend. Northcote has told us that a curious reserve had

[1] 'His name affects the country, which does not know his indecision and timidity,' wrote Hardy in his diary on January 28.

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lately sprung up between the two men, once so intimate; 'they became shy of speaking directly to each other, and I was frequently employed as a medium of communication between them.' It was so now. 'The chief told me,' writes Northcote, 'that he could say nothing to [Derby], but that if I could persuade him to stay he would be very glad. He did not think I should succeed. . . . I spent the whole of Saturday in negotiation, and have kept the letters which passed between us, besides writing which I had one or two long conversations, and on Sunday morning I was able to report my success.' It was a difficult job that Northcote undertook; for Salisbury, to the satisfaction of his colleagues, was prepared to take over the Secretaryship of State, and yet Derby would accept no other post. Only a sense of public duty could have induced Derby to return; though he spoke of his action next week in the House of Lords as the most natural thing in the world; he had resigned because the Cabinet had taken a decision with which he could not agree, but, the cause of the difference having disappeared, he had no hesitation in withdrawing his resignation.

There was one high authority in the State to whom Derby's return would be very unwelcome. For many months the Queen had insisted, with no little reason, in her communications with Beaconsfield, that the one indispensable preliminary to a courageous and steadfast foreign policy was the substitution of another Secretary of State for Derby, whose person and policy had been antipathetic to her from early days. Beaconsfield had to use all his diplomacy to overcome Her Majesty's reluctance; his most effectual argument being that Derby's position, after his return without Carnarvon, would be one of vastly less influence and importance.

To Queen Victoria.

10, Downing St., *Jan.* 26, '78.

Madam, and most beloved Sovereign,—I fear your Majesty will never pardon me for writing to your Majesty this

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letter, but my duty to your Majesty impels me, and I entreat your Majesty to deign to extend to me your Majesty's commanding judgment and infinite indulgence.

It is represented to me, by all the great authorities on these matters, that the retirement of Lord Derby is producing disastrous results on the Conservative party, both in Parliament and out of doors. A general disintegration is taking place. The vote of Monday next, which would have originally been carried by a large majority, and on which I depended as exercising a great influence on Austria and Russia, is, with this disruption of the Cabinet, not only endangered, but even problematical.

All the Lancashire members, and others who represent the chief seats of manufactures and commerce, cannot any longer be relied on, and our friends in Lancashire, who were organising public meetings on a large scale to support your Majesty's Government, and answer the mechanical agitation of the last month, have telegraphed that, in consequence of the assumed resignation of Lord Derby, they must relinquish the attempt.

Almost every member of the Cabinet has pressed strongly on me to advise your Majesty to retain him, especially the Lord Chancellor, who has conferred with my leading colleagues privately. The policy of your Majesty's Government cannot be changed one whit; and neither Lord Derby, nor anyone else, can join your Majesty's Government, who is not immediately prepared to support the vote of six millions, which will be proposed on Monday.

The Lord Chancellor and others seem to think that Lord Derby regrets his withdrawal, to which he was induced by the personal representations of Lord Carnarvon, himself suffering under depressing illness. Lord Beaconsfield has had no communication with him, and his resignation in the House of Lords last night was not announced, because, it is believed, he did not wish to connect that act with the resignation of Lord Carnarvon.

The Lord Chancellor is of opinion that in this state of affairs, and indeed in future, the conduct of Lord Derby may be powerfully controlled by the Cabinet. They will dictate the instructions to your Majesty's Ministers at the Conference, and there too your Majesty would be careful to be represented by those your Majesty can entirely trust.

The Lord Chancellor, also, pointed out that Lord Derby would now be alone in the Cabinet, for Lord Salisbury is now entirely in everything with the Prime Minister, and of Lord Carnarvon we have for ever got rid.

I place, with much agitation and disquietude, these state-

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ments before your Majesty for your Majesty's gracious consideration. We are dealing with great and pressing affairs, and the attitude of Austria is critical. If your Majesty deigns to empower me to communicate with Lord Derby, I will obey your Majesty's commands.

I have not over-stated, or colored, anything.

I am greatly distressed in mind, but I am ever your Majesty's devoted BEACONSFIELD.

P.S.—I ought to mention to your Majesty, that if, as some good judges suppose, war, and a dissolution of Parliament, are inevitable, it would be important to retain Lord Derby until the dissolution is over, and then, if necessary, he could retire with impunity.

From Queen Victoria.

OSBORNE, *Jan.* 27, '78.

MY DEAR LORD BEACONSFIELD,—I answer you as you kindly addressed me and as I hope you will do, whenever it is easier, which it undoubtedly is. I will not pretend to conceal from you that I was a good deal startled and annoyed at the contents of your letter. But I have no other object but that of maintaining the dignity and interests of this country, and therefore I am ready to withdraw my acceptance of Lord Derby's resignation, if, in doing so, you are certain of carrying the vote, which is all-important, and if you continue in a firm and decided line. The changes (of course in many cases unavoidable) of purpose, and the necessary silence on the communications with other Powers give an appearance of vacillation and mystery to our conduct which weakens our position in Parliament, and it would be of immense advantage if we could announce to Parliament that we are acting with Austria. The telegrams from Sir A. Buchanan, reporting what the Emperor of Austria said as well as what Count Andrassy said, seem to me so very distinct as to their strong objection to the terms of the Peace (which are outrageous), that she [? I] should think there ought to be no difficulty for the two Governments to act together.

The telegram just received saying that the Porte dare not divulge the bases of Peace, as Russia threatens her, is really an insult to all the Powers who signed the Treaty of Paris and took part in the Conference at Constantinople. Surely something will be done on our part as soon as possible to effect this object?

To return to Lord Derby: if he would take another office, like Privy Seal—as he says himself he feels unequal to the labour of his present office and his great dilatoriness was one of the most alarming features in his very peculiar character

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all throughout these two very trying years—it would be far the best. But I offer no objection to any arrangement you think best for the welfare of the country and to strengthen and support the Government. The great dislike to go to war arises no doubt from the ignorance of people, who do not see that, if Russia has all her own way, we shall suffer also in a commercial point of view, and shall still less avoid it in future. A dissolution would be much to be deprecated as it would cause such excitement and agitation and things would be said which would show a division of feeling in the nation of which Russia would take great advantage.

I am so truly grieved at all your trouble and anxiety and at Mr. Corry's illness which at this moment is most unfortunate.

What I want especially to lay stress on, is the necessity of not losing time, and thereby not letting any opportunity slip which might prevent matters getting still worse. So many telegrams seem to require answering. You must I am sure feel that, if you had been listened to 6 months ago, this present complication might have been avoided.

The countermanding of the fleet at the very entrance of the Dardanelles is most unfortunate I think. . . .

Hoping to hear soon, believe me, with the sincerest regard, Yours aff'ly, V. R. & I.

The reconciliation was effected by Sunday morning, and a strenuous and agitated week was followed by that unusual portent, a Sunday Cabinet. To Salisbury, on whose judgment in foreign affairs, rather than on Derby's, Beaconsfield had now begun to rely, and whose helpfulness and disregard of self-interest during the crisis had been conspicuous, his chief sent a letter of warm acknowledgment.

To Lord Salisbury.

10, DOWNING ST., *Jan.* 27, 1878.—I inferred from your significant remark, at yesterday's Cabinet, respecting Derby, that you desired his return.

I have succeeded in accomplishing that, tho' a Pyrrhic victory: at least I feel I have not sufficient energy remaining to go through another such trial.

The Cabinet is called to-day at 5 o'c. It is necessary for Northcote's sake, but I thought it desirable, as the most effective mode, to-morrow, of answering the rumors afloat respecting D.

I must express my sense of the cordial co-operation and

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confidence I have received from you throughout this affair. It is a good omen for the Sovereign and the country; and I can assure you, and I ought to assure you, that your behavior at headquarters is entirely understood and completely appreciated.

The continuation of the correspondence with the Queen describes the Council of that Sunday, January 27. It will be seen that Derby marked, by his attitude in Cabinet, the distrustful and unconciliatory spirit in which he resumed office. He had made it clear in his final letter to Northcote, that, as he wrote in his diary, 'I remain rather in the hope of preventing mischief as long as I can, than from sympathising with the views of my colleagues.'

To Queen Victoria.

10, Downing St., *Jan.* 27, '78.—. . . The Cabinet, which had principally to consider the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to be made to-morrow, met late, and sate long, and therefore Lord Beaconsfield cannot write at the length he could wish. He received your Majesty's gracious telegram, and, cannot, on this occasion, attempt to express his deep sense of all your Majesty's goodness in the almost overpoweringly difficult position in which he finds himself. Lord Derby was offered Indian Sec'y, Colonies, Privy Seal, or Lord Presidency, but no arrangement could be made. He held that his honor required the Foreign Office or nothing, which of course he said he preferred. His attending the Cabinet, which will appear to-morrow, will equally astonish, and disappoint, the Opposition, who looked upon the days of the present Administration as numbered. That may not be the case, but its days will be days of terrible toil and danger, and it will have to encounter great crises in affairs.

Lord Beaconsfield saw the Austrian Ambassador to-day. They are terribly alarmed, and believe they have been entirely deceived by Russia.

In this projected Austrian alliance, Lord Beaconsfield was much helped by Mr. Corry, whose services he has now lost. It is a great blow. Mr. Corry has broken down from overwork and over-anxiety. His nervous system has given way. His loss to Lord Beaconsfield cannot be estimated. He has fine talents, a sweet temper, wonderful energy, and a noble disposition. Besides, he understood, and appreciated, your Majesty's character, which was a bond of sympathy between

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them, and a source of constant consolation. Mr. Corry will have to travel abroad.

Lord Derby did not resume his usual seat in the Cabinet, which was next to Lord Beaconsfield, but sate far apart in the vacant seat of Lord Carnarvon. This was very marked. He is evidently in a dark temper, but all must be borne at this moment. When we have carried the six million vote, we shall be freer and more powerful. . . .

Jan. 28.—. . . Ld. Beaconsfield thanks your Majesty for your Majesty's gracious letter received last evening.

He will not attempt to express his sense of your Majesty's kindness and of the graceful terms in which that kindness is conveyed.

During a somewhat romantic and imaginative life, nothing has ever occurred to him so interesting as this confidential correspondence with one so exalted and so inspiring.

To Lady Bradford Beaconsfield observed a becoming reticence about Derby, but he made no secret of his feelings about Carnarvon.

To Lady Bradford.

10, DOWNING STREET, *Jan.* 27.—. . . Yesterday I cd. not even send the 'two lines.' And now, in less than an hour, there is to be a Cabinet, a Sunday Cabinet! and, after that, much to do.

Lord Derby remains with us, as his presence at the C. to-day will prove. Ld. Carnarvon's was a very ungentlemanlike speech, with details which ought never to have been mentioned; the Faery much disgusted at what she considers an abuse of her permission to refer to Cabinet affairs necessary to elucidate his conduct. They only elucidated his peevish and conceited temper. Besides it was vain and egotistical, and, worse than all, prosy. He must be immensely astonished to find himself detached from Salisbury, and that Derby has left him in the lurch!

Jan. 28.—. . . I am private secretary for poor dear Monty, who is not equal to writing a letter, and goes to-morrow to South of France. What a calamity! And at such a moment!

I am now going to H. of L. I don't know what will happen. They will hardly leave Derby alone. Nothing would have been known of his temporary aberration had not . . . Carnarvon revealed it. . . .

Feb. 1.—. . . I am glad you had time to read G.'s speech. What an exposure! The mask has fallen, and instead of a

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pious Xtian, we find a vindictive fiend, who confesses he has, for a year and a half, been dodging and manœuvring against an individual—because he was a successful rival! . . .

The reference is to a speech that Gladstone made at Oxford on January 30, in which he said that his purpose had been, 'to the best of my power, for the last eighteen months, day and night, week by week, month by month, to counterwork as well as I could what I believe to be the purpose of Lord Beaconsfield.'

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CHAPTER VII.

Final Parting with Derby.

1878.

The more the Russian terms were examined, the less possible it seemed to accept them as a satisfactory basis of peace. They included the creation of a big Bulgaria 'within the limits of the Bulgarian nationality'—a most indefinite phrase—and practically independent of the Porte; the complete independence of Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro; the autonomy of Bosnia and Herzegovina; an indemnity for Russia of unspecified amount, in a form, pecuniary, territorial, or other, to be hereafter determined; and an understanding to safeguard the interest of Russia in the Straits. Though the Opposition professed to regard these provisions as not incompatible with British interests, and therefore opposed Northcote's motion for a Vote of Credit of £6,000,000 to increase the national armaments, public opinion, especially in London and the South of England, rallied to the support of the Government. It was felt that, in face of terms so elastic, and with the Russian forces steadily advancing on Constantinople, it was imperative to make Russian generals and statesmen realise that England was in earnest in her resolve to defend her interests. It was believed by the plain man, as well as by the Prime Minister, that, if a determined front was shown, Russia would yield to our just demands. The music-hall refrain of the moment, which enriched political vocabulary with the term 'Jingo,'—

> We don't want to fight, but, by Jingo, if we do,
> We've got the ships, we've got the men, we've got the money too,—

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however vulgar in expression, gave vent to a real political truth; namely, that England, devoted to peace as she was, meant to make her decisions respected, and possessed the necessary material force for doing so. This was the spirit in which Beaconsfield had acted throughout. Even the cautious and pacific Derby was not unaffected by the popular current. He admitted in the House of Lords that it was very conceivable that circumstances might arise in which the sending up of the fleet to Constantinople would be entirely justified, and would not in any manner endanger the public peace. When the question was raised again in Cabinet on February 2, and the suggestion was made that the Italian and British fleets might combine for such a movement, in case the Russians directly threatened Constantinople, Derby, Beaconsfield told the Queen, 'did not seem adverse to this plan, and appears less scrupulous now that the country begins to speak out. He had evidently persuaded himself that the country was adverse to any interference.'

That Beaconsfield was the mainspring of Government action, that, though another held the seals of the Foreign Office, he was really his own Secretary of State, was generally understood by the country; and the Opposition accordingly directed their onslaughts in the debate against the person of the Minister, drawing a clear distinction between him and his colleagues. The Queen was 'indignant and shocked' at these 'disgraceful attacks'; and Beaconsfield, in response to Her Majesty's sympathy, wrote that such efforts at dividing a Prime Minister from his colleagues were in old days 'not only deemed unfair and unjust and unconstitutional, but ungentlemanlike.' But they could not daunt him; indeed, they only hardened his resolution and increased his power.

After the debate had begun an armistice was at last (on February 1) signed between Russia and Turkey; but Beaconsfield, with good reason, suspected, as he told the Queen, 'that the whole affair of the armistice is a comedy, and that Russia will advance.' Russia did

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advance; and on Thursday, February 7, the last day but one of the debate, her armies were, or were reported to be, in such close and threatening proximity to Constantinople that there was something like a panic on the London Stock Exchange; that the approaches to Westminster were thronged with excited and patriotic crowds cheering Beaconsfield; and that the opposition to the Vote of Credit suddenly collapsed. Beaconsfield described the events of the day to his great friend.

To Lady Bradford.

10, DOWNING STREET, *Feb.* 7.—This has been a terrible day of excitement. Last night there came news from Constantinople that all the wires were cut by the Russians, so that our intelligence had to reach us *via* Bombay, that the Russians were on the very point of reaching both Const. and Gallipoli, and that they occupied the principal position in the defensive works of Const., so that the city was at their mercy.

Cabinet at 11 o'ck., rather hard work for those of my colleagues who had been to Münster's ball (to the Austrian Prince) and from wh. I prudently refrained.[1]

The funds fell nearly 2 per ct., and all the Russian stocks, that had been rising, tumbled down—but there seems to be a chance of the situation being exaggerated, and Schou. called Ld. Derby out of the H. of Lords to give him a tel. just received from Gort., declaring the rumors were false. I am not so sure of that, but we are in the thick of great events, and something will happen every day.

The crowd was so great, from this street to H. of Lords, to escort me, that it was very difficult to reach my point of destination, tho' piloted betn. the forms of the daring Abergavenny and the beauteous Abercorn. You wd. have been amused.

[1] Dr. Kidd's treatment enabled Beaconsfield to take some share in the entertainments organised in connection with the visit of the Austrian Crown Prince Rudolph to England. But, while he attended several dinners, he shunned evening receptions and balls. Here are extracts from his letters of this month to Lady Bradford: '*Feb.* 10.—I dined yesterday with Lady C., rather an agreeable party, and I dine to-day with P. Hal to meet the Austrian heir. I could not go to Ct. Beust's reception, and really, tho' Saturday, ball last night, for the same reason I did not go to Münster's, and wh. I gave him, *i.e.*, I die about eleven o'ck. every evening, and am always buried before midnight.' '*Feb.* 13.—. . . I dined at Clarence House on Sunday, and was amused. . . . I dine (D.V.) at the Duke of Cam.'s and also D. of W[ellington]'s, which is a charming future. . . .'

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The Queen's indignation at what she considered Russia's 'monstrous treachery' was extreme; and so was her anxiety that her Ministry should act at once. She wrote Beaconsfield no fewer than three hortatory letters on that one day.

From Queen Victoria.

OSBORNE, *Feb.* 7, '78.—The Queen writes her third letter, but the state is so serious and so critical that she must exhaust every argument to put him in possession of her views—her very strong and decided views. The proceedings in the House of Commons are very satisfactory and the Government must be firm and decided, or the honour as well as the interests of this country and the Throne will be sacrificed, and we shall never be safe from Russia's false, hypocritical intrigues and proceedings. Whether they have got to Constantinople (for in spite of Gortchakoff's answer and denial, the Queen is sure they are there or are nearly so, for Reuter states it, who generally knows, as well as Mr. Layard) on an agreement with Turkey or in spite of the Porte, it is equally a case of breach of faith, and we have told them again and again so.

As early as July 22, '77, Lord Beaconsfield writes:

'Yesterday also in the most formal and even solemn manner the question was brought before the Cabinet what they were prepared to do if Russia occupied Constantinople. They unanimously agreed, and no one stronger and more decided than Lord Salisbury, that the Cabinet should advise your Majesty to declare war against Russia.'[1]

Then in the annexed extract from an account by the Chancellor of the Cabinet held at the beginning of October, the language was equally decided; and on November 16, Lord Beaconsfield writes:

'We have defined those British interests. The occupation of Constantinople or the Dardanelles by Russia would assail one of those interests, and the honor of your Majesty's Crown and of your Government and of your people would then be forfeited if your Majesty by all the means in your Majesty's power did not endeavor to guard your Majesty's Empire from such a result.'[2]

These are only a few extracts out of many letters, and the Queen considers that she has a right to expect that these oft-repeated assurances are carried out. She cannot speak strongly enough, for Great Britain's safety and honour are at stake; and she cannot for a moment doubt [? think] that Lord Beaconsfield, or any of her present Ministers, would sacrifice them.

[1] See above, p. 155. [2] See above, p. 198.

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She cannot rest by day or night till she hears that strong measures are taken to carry out these principles. She hopes Italy will be pressed to join. Oh! if her faithful ally and friend King Victor Emmanuel were still alive, she would at once write to him and her appeal would not have been in vain!

How strange that the poor old Pope should also have gone to his rest now, only four weeks after his opponent.[1]

Beaconsfield required no spur; but Her Majesty's exhortations no doubt helped him with his Cabinet, who next day, without any dissent, adopted once more, and finally, the measure which, little more than a fortnight before, had produced two resignations. Even so, the Queen was hardly appeased; and Beaconsfield found it necessary to proffer a formal defence of the course which the Government had pursued.

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING ST., *Feb.* 9, '78.—Lord Beaconsfield with his humble duty to your Majesty. Just returned from the House of Lords and scarcely time to enter into length upon the incidents of an important day.

He conveyed to the Cabinet the contents of your Majesty's last letter, and read in detail the extracts from his own correspondence and the statement drawn up by the Lord Chancellor at Balmoral; and then he called upon the Cabinet to fulfil their engagement to their Sovereign.

The fact of the armistice being now in our possession, and, that apparently, by its provisions, the Russians could not actually enter Constantinople, obliged him to modify his proposal, but after a long and animated discussion, the Cabinet resolved to send a division of the fleet up to the Turkish capital, and invite all the neutral Powers to join with them in a similar act.

Lord Beaconsfield is told the announcement was received with much cheering in the House of Commons, where the division of last night[2] shows the tone and temper prevalent.

The country is greatly stirring at last; if we only had a *corps d'armée* at Gallipoli, the Crowns of Great Britain and India would be not unworthy of the imperial brow which they adorn.

[1] King Victor Emmanuel died on Jan. 9, and Pope Pius IX. on Feb. 7, of this year, 1878.

[2] The Vote of Credit was carried by 328 to 134 votes.

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From Queen Victoria.

OSBORNE, *Feb.* 9, '78.—The Queen thanks Lord Beaconsfield for his two letters and cypher. She feels deeply, keenly, the way in which—thanks to the . . . conduct of Lord Derby and Lord Carnarvon, acting as it did upon their colleagues—he has been unable to fulfil his engagement to her!

She feels deeply humiliated and must say that she thinks we deserve great censure for the way in which we have abandoned our standpoint; her own first impulse would be to throw every thing up, and to lay down the thorny crown, which she feels little satisfaction in retaining if the position of this country is to remain as it is now. But she thinks in the Conference we may reassert our position, and with Austria (who does not behave well, for she held a fortnight or 3 weeks ago far stronger language than ourselves) and Italy, and any others who will join us, we may come to an agreement, in which to insist on our and European interests being maintained, and to fight for them alone, if we are not supported. . . .

She sends copies of two letters from Lord Derby, who now writes continually, and she will be obliged to answer the second and rather strongly. The country should know who has dragged them down.

The Queen sends some camellias grown in the open air and primroses for Lord Beaconsfield. . . .

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING ST., *Feb.* 10, '78.—Lord Beaconsfield is deeply distressed, indeed feels real unhappiness, at the letter received from your Majesty last night. But tho' he entirely sympathises with your Majesty, and would willingly take any step, or endure any sacrifice, for your Majesty's service and relief, for your Majesty's interests and personal feelings are dearer to him than life, he still ventures to hope, that, on further reflection, it may be felt, that neither the situation of affairs, nor the conduct of your Majesty's Government, need be viewed in so dark a light.

It is not . . . Lord Derby, or even Lord Carnarvon, that has mainly brought about the present, no doubt lamentable, state of affairs: it is the necessary consequence of a policy of neutrality. Vain now to argue whether that was, or was not, a right policy. Enough to say, that an alliance with Turkey was, at the time that policy was adopted, impossible.

In the second place the effects of neutrality have been aggravated by the total and rapid collapse of the Turkish Armies. With regard to the Conference, Lord Beaconsfield

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does not feel sure it will ever take place, and if it do, he doubts whether it will secure peace, but it will give an opportunity for the development of the views of the various Powers, which may lead to practical consequences.

The use of the six million vote is this: it will put your Majesty's forces, now on a peace establishment, on a war footing, so that they will be ready for action when the time arrives, *i.e.*, on the break-up of the Conference, or some analogous event. The present state of affairs is not a conclusion, or a catastrophe. It is not the beginning of the end; it is the end of the beginning.

He had a long conversation yesterday with Col. Wellesley, on the subject of war with Russia without allies. Col. Wellesley does not fear it. The Baltic and the Black Sea both blockaded, Russia would never know where the military attack would take place, whether in Central Asia, or the Euxine, or any other part, and she would have to keep her armies in exhausting restlessness.

If your Majesty's Government have from wilfulness, or even from weakness, deceived your Majesty, or not fulfilled their engagements to their Sovereign, they should experience the consequences of such misconduct, and the constitutional, and becoming, manner of their punishment is obvious. They cannot with their present Parliamentary majority in both Houses, and the existing difficulties, as men of honor, resign, but your Majesty has the clear, constitutional right to dismiss them.

Nor is there any doubt, notwithstanding the apparent dislocation of party in the present Opposition, that your Majesty would be able to find adequate advisers. Lord Beaconsfield indeed impressed this view on the Cabinet yesterday, and pointed out to them, that such a step on the part of your Majesty would not only be a strictly constitutional course, but the obvious solution of many difficulties.

At the same time, Lord Beaconsfield must observe, with the utmost and profound deference, that he is not conscious of having failed in any engagement to your Majesty. It was never in the power of a neutral State to prevent the entry of the Russians into Constantinople. All that a neutral Power could do was [*sic*] that such a step should terminate its neutrality, and it would then feel at liberty to take such measures, as it might deem expedient to counteract the Russian course.

That was the engagement of Lord Beaconsfield, and he is prepared to fulfil it.

Lord Beaconsfield is deeply touched by your Majesty's gracious kindness in deigning to send him some flowers from

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your Majesty's island home. Truly he can say they are 'more precious than rubies'; coming, as they do, and at such a moment, from a Sovereign whom he adores. . . .

From Queen Victoria.

OSBORNE, *Feb.* 10, '78.—The Queen thanks Lord Beaconsfield for his very kind and interesting letter.

He must not for a moment think she would wish to change her Government.

Her only comfort is that Lord Beaconsfield and his Government are so secure and that the country is so thoroughly roused and supports them.

The Queen has perfect confidence in him and great confidence in all his colleagues *but one*, and it was only to urge *him* on to support him in a bold, firm, decided course that she wrote as she did. . . .

The Queen thinks a policy of neutrality is fatal. It has not kept the Russians in check, and yet we have offended and thwarted them, while we have estranged the Turks with whom we could have done anything, and have lost all power over them. . . .

The Cabinet, having taken the plunge and ordered the fleet into the Sea of Marmora, showed a disposition to support all the forward movements which Beaconsfield suggested. Derby assumed in Ministerial councils an air of detachment rather than of opposition; and apparently made no serious objection to the consequential measures proposed, though he intimated his personal dissent from some of them. Ever since the crisis at the end of January, Beaconsfield had been in regular private consultation about foreign affairs with Salisbury and Cairns, rather than, as in old days, with Derby; and the Prime Minister himself openly conducted the Eastern policy of the country in Cabinet, leaving to the Foreign Secretary the part, for which he was pre-eminently fitted, of critic-in-chief, sometimes captious, but often helpful. Derby, in fact, during this last couple of months of office, was reduced in regard to the Eastern Question, apparently without protest if not with his own consent, almost to the position of an under-secretary, serving the Prime Minister and the Cabinet, seeing Ambassadors

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and writing despatches on their behalf, but without independence or initiative of his own. His discharge of even these subordinate functions was by no means always to the satisfaction of his chief.

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING ST., *Feb.* 16, '78.—Lord Beaconsfield . . . grieves he has not been able, the last two days, to keep your Majesty informed of affairs as much as he could wish, but he has been physically incapable of doing what, in general, is not only a duty, but a delight.

Cabinets every day, and sometimes—indeed generally—of unusual length, the necessity of private conference with his colleagues, to keep affairs in proper train, and the general conduct of business, have so absorbed and exhausted him, that towards the hour of post he has not had clearness of mind, and vigor of pen, adequate to convey his thoughts and facts to the most loved and illustrious being, who deigns to consider them.

In addition to this, he has been obliged to conduct the secret and unofficial negotiations with Austria, which he hopes he has now brought to a conclusion, and that she will put into the field immediately at least 300,000 men, and join Great Britain in an identic note to Russia, which will announce, that we cannot consent to go into conference unless Russia retires from Constantinople, or places Gallipoli, and the fortresses of the Straits, in the custody of Great Britain, or of garrisons of the neutral Powers.

Mr. Corry greatly helped him in the conduct of this important affair, but alas! there is no Mr. Corry now, and, sometimes, Lord Beaconsfield feels that he can scarcely stem the torrent. It truly makes him miserable, that your Majesty should ever feel yourself neglected, and yet he is conscious all day, that, notwithstanding his heart and brain are at your Majesty's service, your Majesty must be sensible of some difference in the frequency and fulness of his communications. He humbly hopes your Majesty will be indulgent to him in this respect. He feels there is no devotion that your Majesty does not deserve, and he only wishes he had youth and energy to be the fitting champion of such an inspiring Mistress as your Majesty.

To-day, the Cabinet discussed the Sultan's offer, contained in Mr. Layard's tel. despatch, and empowered your Majesty's Ambassador to purchase, if possible, the chief ships of the Turkish fleet, promising their best offices to prevent the

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Russians entering Constantinople, and offering hospitality if necessary, in your Majesty's fleet, to the Sultan.

Then they resumed the consideration of the means for securing the Dardanelles.

And then they considered the Austrian alliance, the negotiations for which had been hitherto conducted, unofficially, by the Prime Minister, and sent instructions to Sir Henry Elliot, which Lord Beaconsfield hopes may bring them to a formal conclusion. After that they examined Sir Lintorn Simmons on military questions, chiefly with reference to the Straits.

Lord Derby offers little resistance to all these plans and proposals; indeed only that occasional criticism, which is not only justifiable, but salutary. Whether this disposition will continue, Lord Beaconsfield knows not, but there is no chance, he thinks now, of any relaxation in the determination of the Cabinet. They meet every day, and every day seem more resolute.

To Lord Derby.[1]

10, Downing St., *Feb.* 28, '78.—I must point out to you how insufficient, in my opinion, is the manner in which F.O. has expressed the resolutions of the Cabinet about the preliminaries of peace.

The enclosed tel. means, that H.M. Government wish to know, as soon as possible, the terms of the peace made between Russia and Turkey,

No one ever doubted, that we should hear this quite as soon as we could wish.

What the Cabinet wanted to know was, What are the terms, which Russia proposes to Turkey, and as to which Turkey hesitates to accept? It is very likely, that Russia will refuse to tell us, and will not allow Turkey to tell. But we can, then, say, we have asked, and have been refused.

I don't think we are justified, in the present crisis, to be sending to Russia civil messages. 'We shall be obliged to you, as soon as you have made your terms with Turkey, to let us know what they are.'

I am very anxious about this matter, as the Cabinet counts, when it meets again, on a reply from Russia, on which they would be prepared to shape their course.

Depend upon it, the uneasiness and dissatisfaction of the country on this head are great, and Parliamentary action, from our own side, will be the disastrous consequence.

[1] This letter to Derby was based on a private remonstrance which Beaconsfield had received from Cairns.

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[ENCLOSURE.]

Ld. Derby to A. H. Layard.

Telegram. F.O., *Feb.* 27, '78. 6 p.m.—I have to-day stated to the Russian Ambassador that, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, it is essential that they should be informed, with as little delay as possible, of the terms of peace now being negotiated. Your Excellency should address the same request to the Porte.

From many quarters there came warnings that, in spite of all assurances, it was the Russian intention to occupy Constantinople, at least to the extent of marching their troops through the town in order to embark them for home from the port. The Crown Princess of Prussia told her mother Queen Victoria on February 8 that the Emperor William I. had always understood that to be one of the terms of the armistice; and a telegram arrived from St. Petersburg on February 11 that Loftus learnt from a secret authentic source that orders had been sent to the Russian commander-in-chief to occupy Constantinople with the consent of the Sultan. Beaconsfield was not dismayed, and entreated the Queen 'not to indulge in unnecessary anxiety.' 'The difficulties and dangers, no doubt, are numerous and considerable,' he told Her Majesty on February 13, 'but Lord Beaconsfield has no fear of ultimately overcoming them, now that he has the support alike of his Sovereign, the Parliament, and the nation. England alone can do it, but he feels we have powerful allies.' There was reason to believe that Bismarck was secretly encouraging Austria to join England in resisting Russia.

Beaconsfield's confidence was not misplaced. The fleet came unharmed through the Dardanelles, though the Sultan, with the invader at his gates, refused to grant the firman for the passage; and Russia, now that the British ships lay ready for action in the Sea of Marmora, shrank from taking any extreme step which might provoke war with a further foe. She neither entered Constantinople nor attacked the lines of Boulair and the penin-

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sula of Gallipoli. We on our side made no attempt to land. Meanwhile Beaconsfield hurried forward the arrangements for a military expedition from England, should such be required; and Woolwich and Chatham hummed with warlike preparation. He approved the choice of Napier of Magdala to command, with Wolseley as chief of the staff, telegraphing for the former to Gibraltar and insisting that a preliminary consultation should at once be held with the latter. 'There is no time to be lost,' he wrote to Hardy on February 17; 'much depends upon the power to act, when we do act, with promptness.'

The military preparations which the Cabinet undertook impressed forcibly upon Ministers the desirability of having some place of arms in the Levant, either port or island, where British troops might assemble in force, and British ships might anchor and coal in safety. Malta was too far off Constantinople and Egypt, and was too small in area. 'Over and over again,' Northcote tells us, 'did we curse Gladstone for having given up Corfu, which would have been invaluable to us.' Beaconsfield had foreseen this necessity for many months and had realised how the acquisition of such a place of arms might indirectly give Turkey the financial help which she sorely needed, but which her own maladministration and bankruptcy had made it impossible to afford by way of loan. He had sketched out his idea in a letter to the Ambassador at Constantinople.

To Austen Henry Layard.

Most Secret. 10, DOWNING STREET, *Nov.* 22, '77.—Musurus has more than once, of late, anxiously enquired, whether there was any chance of financial assistance from England. I have not given him encouragement; but have told him, that the suspension of payments, on the part of his Government, has deprived a person in my position of the plausible proposition of a Turkish loan with the guarantee of Great Britain for the interest. Any proposal of that kind, now offered to Parliament, would be looked upon as a vote of a gross sum to Turkey, and nothing more; and it would scarcely be listened to.

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It has occurred to me, that some substantial assistance might be afforded to the Porte, if we could contrive to purchase some territorial station conducive to British interests. Anything in the Mediterranean might excite general jealousy, unless it figured as a coaling station, and that would not involve a sufficiently large sum. A port in the Black Sea once occurred to me, but difficulties might arise from the Straits treaty, etc.

At present, I apprehend Turkey might invite us to navigate the Euxine, but she might refuse. If the freedom of the Straits to all nations were ever conceded, our possession of Batoum, for example, might be alike advantageous to her and ourselves.

Again, a commanding position in the Persian Gulf might be a great object to us, if Armenia is lost to the Porte.

I wish you would consider this matter, and advise me thereon.

If a sum could be secured to the Porte, which would render it possible to enter into a second campaign, the result, as to after negotiations, might be great. If we could combine with it the presence of the English fleet in the Bosphorus, and a British army corps at Gallipoli and Durkos, and all this without a declaration of war against Russia, I think the Ottoman Empire, though it may have lost a province or two, which every Power has in its turn, might yet survive, and, tho' not a first-rate Power, an independent and vigorous one. . . .

I ought to tell you . . . that six months ago, the present Grand Vizier was in communication with an Englishman at Constantinople, one Bright, since dead, with the view of raising a large sum from England by the sale of Turkish possessions; all this on a large scale—the *suzeraineté* of Egypt for example, or Crete, etc., etc. This Bright was in communication with Colonel Gordon, a subordinate of the War Office, who sent his letters to the Government, but no step was taken.

The idea was first broached in Cabinet, Beaconsfield told the Queen, on February 27; and it was soon associated with a superficially attractive scheme, which, however, was never realised, of a Mediterranean league. From the first Derby protested against the acquisition of a fresh place of arms; and Beaconsfield recognised that, when that step was definitely accepted and acted on, Derby's final resignation was inevitable. In spite of the Foreign Secretary's protests, however, the policy was, it will be seen, pro-

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visionally and hypothetically adopted on March 8, by formal Cabinet resolution. As the resolution was only provisional and hypothetical, and a definite proposal to occupy Mytilene was at the same time abandoned, there was no occasion then for resignation, unless Derby were to follow Carnarvon's unfortunate precedent of provisional and hypothetical resignation.

Sir Stafford Northcote to Queen Victoria.

WINDSOR CASTLE, *Mar.* 2, '78.—Sir Stafford Northcote presents his humble duty to the Queen, and has the honour, in obedience to your Majesty's commands, to report what passed at the Cabinet to-day.

Lord Beaconsfield began by observing that whatever might be the truth as to particular demands, the general character of the Russian conditions of peace was sufficiently known to enable us to form a judgment.

There were three points on which we ought to feel anxious:

1st. The military position of the country, as affecting its communications with the East.

2nd. The financial situation.

3rd. The question of our trade with the Black Sea and Asia.

As regarded the first point, the Lord Chancellor expressed a wish that something in the nature of a Mediterranean league could be formed, embracing Greece, Italy, probably Austria, and France. The object should be to secure the trade and communications of Europe with the East from the overshadowing interference of Russia. The Powers might agree on the points to be secured. . . .

The points suggested for possible occupation in the event of any action being necessary were Mytilene, St. Jean d'Acre, and a post on the Persian Gulf. This would give a strong chain of communication with India.

Lord Derby entered a sort of protest against the principle of an occupation.

A committee was appointed to consult the military and naval authorities as to the best course of action.

To Queen Victoria.

Most Secret. 10, DOWNING ST., *Mar.* 2.—. . . A most interesting Cabinet. Lord Beaconsfield brought his plans forward again, which were supported by everyone except Lord Derby.

Lord Beaconsfield feels convinced, that Lord Derby will retire, perhaps not immediately, but in a week's time or so.

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The Cabinet has sent for Lord Lyons, that they may consult as to temper of French Government about Egypt, etc., etc.

'The plot thickens.' . . .

Mar. 6.—. . . Lord Beaconsfield is much pleased with the First Lord of the Admiralty [W. H. Smith], who is both calm and energetic. With respect to affairs in general, Lord Beaconsfield wishes to remove a misapprehension from your Majesty's mind, that the presence of Lord Derby in the Cabinet, at this moment, is the cause of delay and weakness in your Majesty's councils. That is not the case. It is highly probable, that Lord Derby, when Lord Beaconsfield proposes his measures for the adoption of the Cabinet, will retire, but, at present, these measures are not sufficiently matured to be introduced to the consideration of the Cabinet, tho' unceasing attention is given to their preparation by Lord Beaconsfield himself. But it is not sufficient to be bold, one must also be prudent; and the number of points to consider is considerable. . . .

Lord Beaconsfield hopes to bring about a league of the Mediterranean Powers to secure the independence of that Sea. But this is a secret of secrets, and its success greatly depends on inviolable confidence. It must be managed, a great deal, by private communications with colleagues, and not be brought, at least at present, before the entire Cabinet. . . .

He entreats your Majesty not to be unnecessarily anxious and not to write too much at night. If your Majesty is ill, he is sure he will himself break down. All, really, depends upon your Majesty.

Mar. 8.—Lord Beaconsfield . . . is now going to the Cabinet. The question of occupying a station on the Asiatic coast is necessarily mixed up with consideration of the request of the Sultan to withdraw our fleet from Marmora, in case the Russians will withdraw from Constantinople. It is a difficult business, but Lord Beaconsfield thinks he sees his way. But there is another matter still more pressing, for Parliament is going to ask questions about it—the Congress, its locality, its object, etc., etc. Lord Beaconsfield thinks, with regard to the latter point, that there are two conditions on which we should insist.

1. That every clause in the Treaty of Peace between Russia and Turkey should be submitted to the Congress.

2. That no territorial change of any kind shall be sanctioned which is not also submitted to Congress.

He is obliged to write all this hurriedly, but he wishes your Majesty, if possible, to know everything that is going on, even if your Majesty is told it so roughly.

The violets and primroses came to him when he was in a

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somewhat exhausted and desponding mood, and he felt their magic influence.

(*Later.*) . . . A very long but most interesting Cabinet. . . . In the first place, most gratifying and most important intelligence from the Admiral. He finds his position in the Sea of Marmora much more satisfactory than he contemplated. He has reconnoitered well the Bosphorus, and is quite prepared to force it when necessary, and to enter the Black Sea. He is not panic-struck by torpedoes at all. He seems to have no doubt of ample supplies, and of fuel.

He says, if the Russians occupy Boulair and the lines, he can manage it: a little damage perhaps, but nothing serious. He has, Lord Beaconsfield thinks, six iron-clads (perhaps five) and five other craft. He could cut off the Russians from all their supplies *via* Black Sea. Experience has so changed his views, that he does not wish to leave his station.

This alters everything: we are in a commanding position.

As there was some difficulty started about a rock in the channel to the harbour of Mytilene, which we intended to occupy, we have appointed a Committee of three of the Cabinet to report on the matter, and on any other preferable position, if there be one. The altered state of affairs in Sea of Marmora gives us time for this.

But in order to pledge the Cabinet to a positive policy, and to have no further debate on the point, the Cabinet came to a formal resolution drawn up by the Lord Chancellor, which Lord Beaconsfield encloses.

Lord Derby would not concur. Whether he immediately resigns or not, Lord Beaconsfield cannot say, but the Cabinet has taken the management of the F.O. into its own hands.

To-morrow, early, they will consider our relations with Greece, and an invitation to Italy to join in a Mediterranean League. The resignation of Crispi, a creature of Bismarck, will help us. The Cabinet will launch the League with Italy and Greece alone, if the other Mediterranean Powers decline. We count as such France and Austria. If the League is floated, they will soon join.

Lord Beaconsfield fears, that having agreed to Vienna (a capital) for the Congress, we cannot well decline Berlin, but we shall be stiff to make stipulations. Austria is on her knees to us to go to Berlin, and vows she will be faithful. 'Methinks the lady doth protest too much.'

He ought to say much more, but he cannot. He hopes your Majesty remembers your gracious promise not to write at night, at least not so much. He lives only for Her, and works only for Her, and without Her, all is lost. . . .

[*Drawn up by the Lord Chancellor.*] 'The Cabinet agree

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that in the event of the Treaty of Peace between Russia and Turkey, after its revision by the Conference, or in default of any Conference taking place, compromising the maritime interests of Great Britain in the Mediterranean, a new naval station in the east of the Mediterranean must be obtained, and if necessary by force.'

HOUSE OF LORDS (*still later*).—. . . With respect to Berlin, every other Government, except your Majesty's, has accepted that city as the scene of the Congress, and if your Majesty declines to be represented there, the Congress will probably be held without the presence of your Majesty's representatives, which would not be desirable.

Austria is on her knees to us to agree to Berlin, giving the most solemn assurance that she has no secret treaty or understanding with Russia; that Germany will support her, and that, with the aid of Great Britain, Russia may be seriously checked.

Lord Beaconsfield is of opinion, that, throughout the transactions of the last two years, much too much consideration has been given to the disposition of other Powers. England is quite strong enough, when the nation is united as it is now, to vindicate and assert her own rights and interests. There have been terrible opportunities lost, and terrible acts of weakness committed, by us during these two years, but the nation was perplexed, bewildered, and half-hearted. The nation is so no longer. She is fresh, united, and full of resources, and a state of affairs must be substituted for that which has been destroyed and displaced. We must think less of Bismarcks and Andrassys and Gortchakoffs, and more of our own energies and resources. We must rebuild, and on stronger foundations than before, for doubtless they were nearly worn out. Your Majesty will soon have a navy superior to all the navies united of the world, and, in a short time, an army most efficient, not contemptible in number, and with a body of officers superior to that of any existing force.

Your Majesty must pardon this scrawl. He writes with great difficulty where he is now sitting, with no light but gas, and metal pens, which he abhors. He entreats your Majesty to take a more cheering view of affairs. He has no fear, if he be spared, of conducting them to a satisfactory, and even triumphant, end.

In the diplomatic controversy with Russia, Beaconsfield's main contention, in which he was supported by Derby no less than by the rest of his colleagues, was that Russia must submit her terms of peace with Turkey to

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the judgment of Europe. The affairs of the Near East had been regulated by Europe in the Treaties of 1856 and 1871; and no modification of those treaties, the British Government maintained, could be regarded as valid except with the assent of the Powers who had been parties to them. This demand was put forward by Derby early in January, as soon as it was understood that Russia and Turkey were in negotiation; and was repeated categorically to the Russian Government on several subsequent occasions. Russia's response was evasive; but she acknowledged at the close of January in general terms that questions bearing on European interests should be concerted with European Powers; and accordingly agreed to the assembling of a European conference at Vienna, as proposed by Austria on February 3. The Austrian proposal was heartily welcomed by Beaconsfield and his Cabinet; and they showed themselves equally complaisant, when it was suggested that the Conference should be magnified into a Congress, and should sit at Berlin and not at Vienna. But they insisted on the categorical acceptance of their demand as the condition of British participation. As Derby put it in the middle of March, 'Her Majesty's Government desire to state that they must distinctly understand, before they enter into Congress, that every article in the treaty between Russia and Turkey shall be placed before the Congress, not necessarily for acceptance, but in order that it may be considered what articles require acceptance or concurrence by the several Powers and what do not.'

This condition was all the more necessary, as Russia, in spite of her acceptance of the Conference proposal, had compelled Turkey, by threats of occupying Constantinople, to sign on March 3 at San Stefano a definitive treaty, much more stringent in its provisions than the preliminary terms had led Europe to expect. Beaconsfield thus described, on April 8 in the House of Lords, the effect of the treaty on Turkey-in-Europe.

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The Treaty of San Stefano completely abrogates what is known as Turkey-in-Europe; it abolishes the dominion of the Ottoman Empire in Europe; it creates a large State which, under the name of Bulgaria, is inhabited by many races not Bulgarians. This Bulgaria goes to the shores of the Black Sea and seizes the ports of that sea; it extends to the coast of the Ægean and appropriates the ports of that coast. The treaty provides for the government of this new Bulgaria, under a prince who is to be selected by Russia; its administration is to be organised and supervised by a commissary of Russia; and this new State is to be garrisoned, I say for an indefinite period, but at all events for two years certain, by Russia.

Besides the creation of a huge Bulgaria, the treaty provided for the complete independence of Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro, with a slight extension of territory for the two latter, and for Rumania the acquisition of the Dobrudscha, but in exchange for the forced retrocession to Russia of Rumanian Bessarabia which had been assigned to Rumania by the Treaty of Paris; the autonomy of Bosnia and Herzegovina; and the application of an organic law, to be settled by arrangement between Russia and Turkey, to the districts of Thessaly and Epirus. In Asia Turkey was to cede to Russia, in lieu of an enormous indemnity, all the eastern portion of Armenia, including Batoum, Kars, Ardahan, and Bayazid; and in addition to pay an indemnity of 45 millions sterling. The question of the Straits was left untouched save by guaranteeing the right of passage of merchant ships at all times; but Beaconsfield argued in the Lords that by the treaty 'the Sultan of Turkey is reduced to a state of absolute subjugation to Russia, and, either as to the opening of the navigation of the Black Sea or as to all those rights and privileges with which the Sultan was invested as an independent Sovereign, he would be no longer in the position in which he was placed by the European treaties. We therefore protest against an arrangement which practically would place at the command of Russia, and Russia alone, that unrivalled situation and the resources

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which the European Powers placed under the government of the Porte.'

The Treaty of San Stefano was negotiated in the strictest secrecy, the Turks being bound by threats to silence; and, though its provisions soon began to leak out, it was not delivered to the British Government till March 23, three weeks after signature. Meanwhile, Russia continued to evade acceptance of the British condition for the Congress, Gortchakoff maintaining that it was sufficient that the treaty should be communicated to the Powers before the meeting, and that each Power should have in the Congress itself 'the full liberty of appreciation and of action.' 'Delphi itself could hardly be more perplexing and august,' said Beaconsfield. Whatever the phrase about liberty of appreciation and action meant, it was clearly not categorical acceptance; and that the Russian attitude was much nearer to categorical refusal was shown by the arrogance of the final reply which reached the Cabinet on March 27. The Russian Government, it ran, 'leaves to the other Powers the liberty of raising such questions at the Congress as they might think fit to discuss, and reserves to itself the liberty of accepting or not accepting the discussion of these questions.'

While waiting for Russia's decision, the Cabinet continued to elaborate the measures of precaution which Beaconsfield had laid before them. His report to the Queen of the meeting of March 16 says: 'They discussed *corps d'armée*, new Gibraltars, and expeditions from India, in great fulness. Lord Derby said nothing.' It will be seen that the idea of a Mediterranean league, which was not received with much favour abroad, had been dropped; and that we have here the first intimation of the project of bringing Indian troops to European waters—a project entirely in harmony with Beaconsfield's policy of magnifying the place of India in the British Empire. At last, on March 24, Beaconsfield obtained confidential information of Russia's definite refusal, and he at once prepared

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for action. His will was indomitable, but, as his letters to Lady Bradford show, he had little health or strength during the critical days.

To Queen Victoria.

Most Secret. 10, DOWNING ST., *Mar.* 24, '78.—. . . The Russian answer has arrived, but will not be delivered, or made known, to anyone, until to-morrow; if then. It rejects our conditions, and will not submit the treaty to the consideration of Congress.

There will be no Congress, as all agree there can be no Congress without England—Russia says this. Russia will, in all probability, immediately commence a direct negotiation with your Majesty's Government.

After all their taunts about isolation, and about being 'left out in the cold,' this is interesting! No Congress and direct negotiations with England.

This information comes to Lord Beaconsfield under such a seal of confidence that Lord Beaconsfield cannot tell it even to his colleagues, but his conscience and his heart alike assure him, that he can have no secrets from his beloved Sovereign.

To Lady Bradford.

10, DOWNING STREET, *Mar.* 22, 1878.—You were prophetic last night, for I have a regular influenza cold—constant coughing and streaming eyes.

I have just had my audience, tho' I was scolded for coming out in such a plight—but my Royal Mistress was not much better than her Minister. The Kingdom was never governed with such an amount of catarrh and sneezing.

I'm too ill and achy to be out later; I have written to D. of Richmond that I can't be in my place. . . .

Mar. 24.—I am still a prisoner, but must, if possible, appear in the H. of L. to-morrow—and I think I shall. . . .

The Russian ultimatum, for so we must call it, has not yet arrived, altho' promised on Saturday. It will come this evening, probably, or to-morrow morn. I think they will not accept our terms, or rather conditions, and we shall not yield an inch. People are very alarmed and think war instantaneous. I do not, and am not at all alarmed. I hold it is much more likely that as Russia finds England firm, and preparing for conflict, she will end by offering separate negotiations with us. . . .

Mar. 25.—Nothing to tell you. Then why do you write? Difficult to answer.

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I am somewhat better, but ought not to go out. Then why do you? Because, plea indisposition, I did not reply to some notice of Granville's on Friday, and have heard since of nothing but my illness. So, at great inconvenience and some risk, I go down to H. of Lords, because I wd. not ask G. again to postpone his motion.

Tels. come every quarter of an hour from a certain place, to know how I am—full of sympathy when sent, and full of anger when not answered. . . .

No news from Russia, tho' I have reason to believe Schou. has the answer, and has had for days.

Mar. 26.—I can only send a little, and a hurried, line.

Nothing can be more critical than the situation, and you must prepare, I think, for great events.

I could not get down to the Windsor Council to-day, as I had promised—but it was impossible. I am suffering very much from my influenza, which my visit to the Ho. of Lords did not improve yesterday—and yet I must repeat it to-day. . . .

Mar. 27.—. . . It is impossible that affairs could be more critical than they are. . . .

Except two days, when I went in a close carriage to H. of L., I have not been out since last Thursday, and this alone makes one nervous.

The spirit in which Beaconsfield approached the fateful Cabinet meeting on March 27, which brought about Derby's resignation, was shown by a letter which he sent on that morning to Hardy. 'Rest assured,' he wrote, 'the critical time has arrived when we must declare the emergency. We are drifting into war. If we are bold and determined we shall secure peace, and dictate its conditions to Europe. . . . On you I very mainly count. We have to maintain the Empire, and secure peace; I think we can do both.'[1] Beaconsfield had probably discussed his plans in detail with Hardy. He had certainly, according to his habit since Derby's first resignation, discussed them with Cairns and Salisbury; and also with Northcote, as Northcote himself tells us. Here are Beaconsfield's reports to the Queen of what he proposed on this occasion and what was decided.

[1] Gathorne Hardy, vol. ii., p. 36.

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To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING ST., *Mar.* 26, '78.—. . . The Russian answer, tho' it arrived here on Saturday, has not yet been delivered to your Majesty's Government.

Yesterday afternoon, Count Schouvaloff called on Lord Derby, and began feeling his way, to give the answer *viva voce*, but Lord Derby said that, as the English conditions were in writing, the reply must be in the same form. Whereupon Count Schouvaloff seemed to be shut up, and murmured that he would send the reply in writing, but it has not come yet.

Lord Beaconsfield has summoned the Cabinet for to-morrow at noon.

The Russian reply has been seen by some members of the Opposition. It is a categorical refusal.

Therefore, to-morrow, Lord Beaconsfield will propose to the Cabinet the measures which he has long matured, and which he trusts will be equal to the occasion. He will recommend immediately calling out the Reserves, which will place immediately at our command two *corps d'armée*, and at the same time will direct the Indian Government to send out a considerable force, thro' the Suez Canal, and occupy two important posts in the Levant, which will command the Persian Gulf and all the country round Bagdad, and entirely neutralise the Russian conquests and influence in Armenia. . . .

Mar. 27.—Lord Beaconsfield . . . has carried all his measures this morning unanimously, with the exception of Lord Derby, who will, no doubt, resign.

When he asks your Majesty's gracious permission to make a statement, etc., your Majesty must be very cautious and reserved in granting the permission, for, otherwise, the statement may tell things to the world, which it is absolutely necessary, for success, should be kept secret: as, for example, the Indian expedition.

It will be necessary that the Mutiny Bill should be passed, before a message is sent down to Parliament and a proclamation issued.

The Cabinet meets again to-morrow at noon to frame the materials for a circular to the different Courts of Europe on the present situation.

It will be our case in the face of Europe and our own country. He [Beaconsfield] has had a good night and feels at this moment much relieved by what has just occurred. . . .

Later.—. . . Lord Derby has tendered his resignation, and wishes to make his announcement to-morrow.

It should be kept quite secret at this moment, as they have

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a reception at the F.O. to-night, and their position, were the resignation known, would be painfully ludicrous. Lord B. conceals it therefore even from his colleagues. Lord Beaconsfield requests from your Majesty authority to receive the resignation and also to arrange with Lord Derby as to his statement. He seems perfectly loyal, and desirous of saying nothing disagreeable to his colleagues, or injurious to the public service. . . .

The only military plans of Lord Napier are in the hands of H.R.H. the F.-M. Commanding in Chief. They seemed to Lord Beaconsfield meagre.

From Queen Victoria.

WINDSOR CASTLE, *Mar.* 27, '78.—. . . The Queen must own, that she feels Lord Derby's resignation an unmixed blessing. . . . His name had suffered and was doing great harm to us abroad: and the very fact of his becoming a mere cypher and putting his name to things he disapproved, was very anomalous and damaging. . . . The Queen, therefore, without a moment's hesitation, sanctions Lord Beaconsfield's acceptance of his resignation, but will keep it secret till to-morrow. Pray tell him from the Queen that she relies on his loyalty to his colleagues, as well as to his Sovereign, and feels sure he will join in no factious opposition. But he must be very cautious in what he says, for fear of letting out important measures, which we must keep secret.

Now who is to succeed him? Lord Salisbury or Lord Lyons? . . .

It will be noticed that Beaconsfield does not specify the two important posts in the Levant which were to be occupied by the proposed Indian expedition, nor indeed does he definitely say that the names were given to the Cabinet. But there can be no reasonable doubt that the names were given, and that the posts were Cyprus and Alexandretta (Scanderoon), as mentioned by Derby in confidence, immediately on coming out of Cabinet, to his private secretary, now Lord Sanderson. Besides Beaconsfield's letters to the Queen, there are, as Hardy's diary is apparently silent,[1] no other contemporary records extant, so far as is known, of the proceedings of this decisive Council, except two papers in Derby's hand-

[1] Gathorne Hardy, vol. ii., p. 56.

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writing: one the note which, in accordance with his usual practice,[1] Derby jotted down in Cabinet, and which he sealed up separately; the other a shorter statement which he entered in his private diary, either that evening or the next morning. In view of the discrepant accounts which were afterwards given from memory by Cabinet Ministers, Lord Sanderson has felt justified in authorising, with the concurrence of the present Lord Derby, the publication of these confidential documents. The following is the note in Cabinet:

D[ERBY] reads answer of Schouvaloff. It is a refusal.

LORD B. wishes a circular to be addressed to all the Powers, stating our views.

This is talked over and not dissented from in principle.

D. proposes to lay papers at once and explain in Parliament. This is agreed to.

LORD B. We must now decide our policy. Our objects have been the maintenance of the Empire, and the maintenance of peace. Peace is not to be secured by 'drifting.' All our attempts to be moderate and neutral, and avoid collision with Russia, have lessened our influence, and caused it to be thought that we had no power. Our position is impaired since Parliament met. Austria is more deeply concerned than we are. Austria and Russia are now in a position of great mutual difficulty. Russia has really desired a congress. She has strained her resources, her armies are suffering from disease, etc. Thinks a bold policy will secure peace: one of conciliation will end in war. An emergency has arisen: the balance of power in the Mediterranean is in danger; every State must now look to its own interests. The time is now come when we should issue a proclamation declaring emergency, and be ready to put a force in the field. An expedition from India should occupy Cyprus and Scanderoon. We shall thus neutralise the effect of the Armenian conquest. Influence of England in the Persian Gulf will be maintained. These points are the key of Asia. Proposes to communicate

[1] Writing to Beaconsfield on July 14, 1877, Derby says: 'The notes which I generally take at Cabinets . . . have been kept merely for purposes of convenient reference; those of old dates have been from time to time destroyed, and all will be. I have always understood it to be an unwritten rule of administrative practice, that no permanent record should remain of what passes in Cabinet. But to temporary memoranda kept, while they exist, for personal use, I know of no objection.'

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with the Porte, to guarantee the revenues now received, so that they shall not lose. This does not involve alliance with the Porte. Nor is it inconsistent with anything we have done. Thinks it important that these two steps shall be taken. Wishes to call the resources of India into play, and show that from England also we can send forth our hosts. Time has come, the emergency has arisen.

CAIRNS. Great and grave emergency has arisen. We have been neutral, but we always said we meant to have something to say to the peace. Russia now tells us we shall not. Thinks the time is come to make our resources available. We want a counterpoise to what is doing in Armenia. Position in India will be shaken if we do nothing.

SALISBURY was always against interference in the war and therefore feels especially responsible. Policy of neutrality was dangerous, though right. Russia refuses to allow our voice to be heard. We must put ourselves in a position to assert our views by force if necessary. It is necessary therefore to declare an emergency at once. If this opportunity is lost, it will not recur. As to Scanderoon, it commands the route both to Suez Canal and to the Persian Gulf. We must be ready to defend both these routes. It also gives as little offence to France as any occupation can. It also maintains our influence over the Asiatic populations. Their feeling towards us will be changed, if there is not a visible exertion of our power. They will look to Russia. Doubts as to first obtaining the consent of Turkey. Wishes not to do anything hostile to Turkey, but it is hardly fair to ask her. Would do it first. The question of Cyprus is less urgent than that of Scanderoon. Would act at once as to that.

HARDY. We have now no choice except to maintain our own interests. Comments on the Russian answer. The whole Treaty concerns us. Time has come as to declaring an emergency. As to Scanderoon leaves that to be judged by military men.

J. MANNERS agrees in general policy. Would send Mussulman regiments if possible.

NORTHCOTE. Is it necessary to go to Parliament? (Answer—yes, for a vote.) Asks as to course of proceeding.

RICHMOND entirely agrees that time is come to take some action.

(Some general talk.) Necessity of secrecy as to the expedition insisted upon by Lord B. and agreed to. (Some talk.)

D. declares dissent on grounds of general policy—come to point where two roads part.

SALISBURY does not see that compromise is possible.

RICHMOND. We can't go drifting on.

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CAIRNS. We are driven out of Congress.

NORTHUMBERLAND can see no step except this to take. Security of the road to India is all-important.

CROSS. Question is which course is most likely to lead to peace.

LORD B. Austria will bring about a settlement of the Bulgarian situation. It is the Armenian danger which is to be guarded against.

(Some more talk, but not to any purpose.)

The following is Derby's entry in his diary:

Wednesday, Mar. 27.—Cabinet at 12, sat only till 1; but the business done was important both nationally and to me in particular. Lord B. addressed us in a set speech, to the effect that we must now decide our policy; that our objects have been the maintenance of the Empire, and of peace, but peace is not to be secured by 'drifting'; that our attempts to be moderate and neutral have only lessened our influence, and caused our power not to be believed in. He dwelt on the weakness of Russia, with finances ruined, and armies suffering from disease. An emergency had arisen; every State must now look to its own resources; the balance of power in the Mediterranean was destroyed. He proposed to issue a proclamation declaring emergency, to put a force in the field, and simultaneously to send an expedition from India to occupy Cyprus and Scanderoon. Thus the effect of the Armenian conquests would be neutralised, the influence of England in the Persian Gulf would be maintained, and we should hold posts which are the key of Asia.

Cairns and Salisbury both supported the Premier, showing clearly by their language that they were aware of the plan now proposed and had discussed it with him in detail; others supported more vaguely. I declared my dissent in a brief speech, referring to what I had said before, and agreeing with an expression that fell from Salisbury that we must now decide, and that no compromise was possible. We had come, I said, to the point where the roads diverged, and must choose one or the other. I intimated that I could not agree, and it was understood that my resignation was to follow.

These accounts add much interesting and valuable detail to the outline given by Beaconsfield to the Queen; but the reports of the two statesmen are in complete accord, both as to the proposals made, and as to the approval with which they were regarded by the whole Cabinet except Derby. As to the exact nature of that

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approval there is one further scrap of contemporary evidence. Salisbury asked Northcote in Cabinet in writing whether it was agreed that the cost of bringing the Indian troops should be defrayed by the British Exchequer; and he preserved the note which Northcote wrote on the same sheet and passed across to him in reply. It ran thus: 'The agreement absolutely involves a decision in favour of sending such an expedition. I am not opposed to it in principle, but I think we ought to have more than 10 minutes to decide on it. If it is decided to send the expedition, I agree to place the cost on imperial revenues.'[1] It would appear from this interchange of opinion that Salisbury regarded the decision to send the Indian expedition as more definitely taken than Northcote did, but that even Northcote was prepared to accept it in principle. There was, at any rate, no outward dissent, save Derby's, from Beaconsfield's policy; and both the protagonists, Beaconsfield and Derby, came away from the Cabinet with the same impression. Derby told Lord Sanderson, that proposals had been discussed and approved by his colleagues, he alone dissenting, for proclaiming an emergency and calling out the Reserve, and for a secret expedition of troops from India to occupy Cyprus and Scanderoon, and that, in consequence, he intended to resign. Beaconsfield, on his part, as we have seen, told the Queen that all his measures were carried unanimously, save for Derby's dissent; and he specifically mentioned, in the following sentence, the Indian expedition as one of those measures. Indeed, it is clear, both from Beaconsfield's letters and from Derby's note and diary, that the Prime Minister presented his policy as one whole; and orders for the preparation of the Indian force, and for the survey of the necessary landing-places, were immediately despatched.

That Derby would resign when definite steps were

[1] A copy of this note was forwarded by Northcote to Derby in a letter dated July 22, 1878. In writing his subsequent memorandum, Northcote quoted the note inaccurately from memory.

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taken towards acquiring a place of arms in the Levant had long been foreseen by his chief and his colleagues; and he said that day in Cabinet that they had come to a parting of the ways. But he did not actually give in his resignation there and then; and both he and Beaconsfield were glad to make use of Northcote as a means of communication, to avoid alike the awkwardness of writing, and any direct personal clash between old friends. Northcote found Derby, after the Cabinet 'most friendly, and I thought really relieved by getting rid of the "tin kettle," as he called the Foreign Office. He would not, however, write to the chief, but asked me to do so in his name.' Hence there is no letter in existence from Derby, detailing, as at the end of January, the cause of his resignation. When he made his explanation next day in the House of Lords, he was naturally unable to reveal Cabinet secrets; though he had received, in accordance with Beaconsfield's second thoughts, Her Majesty's permission to make 'such statement as you, in your discretion, in which the Queen has entire confidence, may think fit.' He merely stated that the Cabinet had decided on certain measures of a grave and important character in which he had been unable to concur—measures not inevitably tending to bring about war, but not, in his opinion, prudent in the interests of European peace, or necessary for the safety of the country, or warranted by the state of affairs abroad. Any further explanation, should it become necessary, he reserved for a later date. His references to his colleagues, and especially to his chief, were friendly. Every personal motive and every private feeling urged him, he said, to remain with them. 'No man would willingly break, even for a time, political and personal ties of long standing; and in the public life of the present day there are few political and personal ties closer or of older date than those which unite me with my noble friend.'

Beaconsfield fully reciprocated the 'personal respect and regard' in which Derby averred that he held him.

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His emotion as he rose to follow his resigning colleague in debate was very visible. He said:

> The Queen has lost to-day the services of one of the ablest of her counsellors. Those only who have served with my noble friend can sufficiently appreciate his capacity for affairs, the penetrating power of his intelligence, and the judicial impartiality of his general conduct. My lords, I have served with my noble friend in public life for more than a quarter of a century, and during that long period the cares of public life have been mitigated by the consolation of private friendship. A quarter of a century is a long period in the history of any man, and I can truly say that, so far as the relations between myself and my noble friend are concerned, those years have passed without a cloud. . . . These wrenches of feeling are among the most terrible trials of public life. . . . I have felt of late that the political ties between myself and my noble friend must soon terminate; but I believed they would terminate in a very different and a more natural manner—that I should disappear from the scene and that he would remain. in the maturity of manhood, with his great talents and experience, to take that leading part in public affairs for which he is so well qualified.

These public courtesies were repeated in private. The Queen wrote Derby a gracious letter of thanks for his services, adding: 'The Queen is also certain that she can entirely rely on his loyalty to herself and his former colleagues, especially the Prime Minister; and she is sure that he will never join in any factious opposition to the Government of which he has been so long so distinguished a member.' Derby responded in the same spirit. 'He has left office with no personal feeling, except one of goodwill towards his former colleagues, especially to his very old friend Lord Beaconsfield, from whom it is a real pain to be separated.' He added that he had no desire to oppose, and would leave the disagreeable task of criticism, as far as possible, to others.

Beaconsfield showed his abiding goodwill by the offer of the Garter—an unprecedented act of generosity by a Prime Minister to a colleague who had left him in a crisis; and Derby, though he could hardly accept, was obviously touched by so much magnanimity.

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To Lord Derby.

10, DOWNING ST., *Mar.* 31, '78.—I hope you will allow me to offer you the vacant Garter. I always intended it for you, but there were difficulties in my way. I hope you will now accept it, in memory of our long friendship; if of nothing else.

I suppose you and Miladi are in the country. I have not had a sniff of provincial air for five months.

From Lord Derby.

Private. FOREIGN OFFICE, *M*[*ar*]. 31, '78.—I am touched and gratified by your offer; by the time and manner of it far more than by the thing itself. Give me till to-morrow to consider as to acceptance. In any event, my sense of your kindness will not be less.

Private. April 1.—On thinking fully over the matter, I have decided against accepting the Garter which you so kindly offer me. You will I am sure understand that my refusal is not dictated by any reluctance to accept an honour at your hands, or by any diminution of our old friendship. I shall not forget the offer, nor the time and circumstances of its being made.

There was one more friendly letter, before the intimate correspondence of five and twenty years came to an abrupt close.

From Lord Derby.

23, ST. JAMES'S SQUARE, *April* 3.—When Schouvaloff called to take leave of me, on Monday, he expressed a wish that I should communicate with you on the subject of a report which he said had reached your ears, and which he supposed that you believed to be true.

It was to the effect that he had been in the habit of talking over official matters with members of the Opposition, especially with V[ernon] Harcourt.

He denies having ever held any private conversations with them, or having talked about pending negotiations with anyone except members of the Government.

I told him he had better address his denial direct to you, but he preferred doing it through me, and I could not civilly refuse.

No answer is necessary.

In the course of his speech Beaconsfield, while commending the 'prudence and perfect taste' which had

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prevented Derby from referring in detail to the reasons of his resignation, announced, in order to avoid 'unnecessary mystery,' that the Government, in view of the failure to reach agreement about the Congress, and of the disturbance of the balance of power in the Mediterranean, had decided to call out the Reserve. This was the only part of the Beaconsfield policy, as expounded in the Cabinet of March 27, which it was possible for the Prime Minister to reveal; as the Indian expedition and the acquisition of posts in the Levant, though approved in principle, depended on time and circumstances for execution, and secrecy till the moment of execution was essential for their success. It was also inevitable that he should make the announcement in such a way as to leave the impression that this was the whole precautionary policy so far accepted, in order that the secret might be preserved, and that public opinion at home and abroad might not be set agog as to further measures hinted at but not revealed.

The world naturally concluded, and was presumably meant to conclude, that the calling out of the Reserve was the sole cause of Derby's resignation; and, as that measure of precaution was generally welcomed not only by his own party, but by moderate men in opposition, the seceding Minister met with little or no sympathy or support outside the ranks of the pro-Russian agitators. Conscious that it was the resolve to acquire 'new Gibraltars' in the Levant rather than the summoning of the Reserve to the colours that had decided his action, he was galled by what appeared to him the injustice of the public condemnation, and by what he considered the unfairness of his treatment by his colleagues. He may also have been irritated by the Prime Minister's very natural method of supplying his place in Cabinet. In the shuffle of offices succeeding the resignation, Beaconsfield took the opportunity to secure, so far as might be, in spite of Derby's defection, the continued confidence of Lancashire and the adhesion of the house of Stanley

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by promoting Frederick Stanley, Derby's brother and heir-presumptive, to Cabinet rank as Secretary of State for War. In these circumstances Derby allowed himself, for once, to be governed by his feelings rather than by his cool judgment; and in the Lords debate of April 8 on the calling out of the Reserve he offered a further explanation which, however intelligible and in a sense excusable, violated his obligation not to reveal Cabinet secrets and the duty incumbent on a patriotic ex-Foreign Secretary not to embarrass the country's policy at a crisis. Beaconsfield thus described to the Queen Derby's intervention.

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING STREET, *April* 9, '78.—. . . Lord Derby made a disagreeable and unauthorised speech, for he divulged the proceedings of the Cabinet of which he had been a member, with an absence of discretion and reserve, very unusual under such circumstances, and which will produce a painful effect on public opinion. He will perhaps justify himself by arguing that Lord Beaconsfield made an unnecessary reference to his conduct.

Lord Beaconsfield, who was somewhat wearied, may have erred in this respect, but quite unintentionally, and Lord Derby, if this be his excuse, misunderstood the allusion of Lord Beaconsfield. . . .

Certainly Beaconsfield's reference to Derby in his speech on this occasion was not only unnecessary but also unfortunate. He said that he could not conceive that any responsible person could for a moment pretend that, when all were armed, England alone should be disarmed. He proceeded: 'I am sure my noble friend, whose loss I so much deplore, would never uphold that doctrine, or he would not have added the sanction of his authority to the meeting of Parliament and the appeal we made to Parliament immediately for funds adequate to the occasion of peril, which we believed to exist. No, I do not think such things of him'; and he suggested that only a lunatic could take up such a position. As Derby had strongly objected originally to the earlier summoning of Parliament and the Vote of Credit, and had only con-

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sented in order to prevent the break-up of the Government, the reference was hardly fair. Derby therefore had some provocation; but it was rather petty not to accept in silence responsibility for the Cabinet actions in which he had finally concurred instead of making public the fact of his original objection; and it was hardly patriotic to inform the world, for the purpose of self-justification, that there were other secret decisions of the Cabinet which he deemed of a still more serious and unjustifiable character than the calling out of the Reserve. It is not surprising that Salisbury should have denounced with some warmth such disloyalty to country and to colleagues. These were Derby's actual words about his resignation:

> I have been referred to by my noble friend at the head of the Government, and by newspaper writers and others, as having resigned office in consequence of the calling out of the Reserves. Now I feel bound to tell your Lordships that, whatever I may have thought of that step, it was not the sole, nor indeed the principal, reason for the differences that unfortunately arose between my colleagues and myself. What the other reasons are I cannot divulge until the propositions of the Government, from which I dissented, are made known.

Events, as we shall see, modified Beaconsfield's policy, and the programme of March 27 was never carried out in its fulness. The Indian expedition came to Malta, but proceeded no farther. Alexandretta was not occupied, and Cyprus was acquired, not by force, but by lease from the Porte. But, in spite of these modifications, when European peace had been signed at Berlin nearly four months later, in July, Derby considered himself justified, without obtaining any further permission either from the Queen or from his late chief, in revealing what that programme was from which he dissented. It had become, he thought, 'historical fact,' and he availed himself of 'that discretion which is allowed to an outgoing Minister to state what has really happened.' This was his statement.

> When I quitted the Cabinet in the last days of March, it was on account of the decision then taken—namely, that it

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was necessary to secure a naval station in the eastern part of the Mediterranean, and that for that purpose it was necessary to seize and occupy the island of Cyprus, together with a point on the Syrian coast. This was to have been done by a secret naval expedition sent out from India, with or without the consent of the Sultan; although undoubtedly a part of the arrangement was that full compensation should be made to the Sultan for any loss of revenue which he might sustain. . . . My lords, I endeavoured to induce the Cabinet to reconsider this determination, and from whatever cause the change took place I am heartily glad that that unfortunate resolution was modified.

Derby's old colleagues naturally resented these unlicensed 'revelations from the dark interior of the Cabinet,' to use Salisbury's expression in reply. A settlement had only just, and with difficulty, been effected between Russia and Turkey; and it was distinctly embarrassing to the policy of Great Britain to have a disclosure made of projected measures of precaution, which, however reasonable and right at a moment of acute tension, could hardly be agreeable to either of the recent belligerents, and which, as circumstances had prevented them from being executed, ought to have been kept secret until the lapse of years had rendered their divulgation harmless. Moreover, the Cyprus convention was as yet unratified by the Sultan, who was making difficulties and reservations; a fact which was not indeed known to Derby, but which, from his official experience of Turkish procrastination, he might perhaps have anticipated. But Salisbury allowed justifiable resentment to carry him to unjustifiable lengths. He compared Derby's progressive revelations to the successive fragments of disclosure made by the notorious Titus Oates in regard to the Popish plot; which was tantamount to charging Derby with a particularly mean form of mendacity. He proceeded to a categorical denial of what Derby had said. 'The statement which my noble friend has made to the effect that a resolution had been come to in the Cabinet to take the island of Cyprus and a position on the coast of Syria by a secret expedition, with or without the consent of the Sultan,

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and that that was the ground upon which he left the Cabinet, is a statement which, so far as my memory goes, is not true.' Cries of 'Order' caused him to declare that he did not necessarily impugn Derby's veracity, and to substitute the words 'not correct' for 'not true.' He added that, in his denial of Derby's statement, he was supported by the Prime Minister, the Lord Chancellor, the Secretaries of State for India and the Home Department, the President of the Council, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the First Lord of the Admiralty.

No doubt, the international situation made it desirable that Derby's account should be discredited. But the connected history which has been given here from original documents forces us to the conclusion that what Derby said was substantially correct, and that the denial can only be justified on narrow and technical grounds. In support of this denial there have been published not only an extract from Northcote's memorandum, drawn up after the close of the Ministry, but also a short note by Cross, evidently written in later life, and an extract from Hardy's diary of July 19, 1878.[1] None of these is contemporary with the Cabinet meeting, even Hardy's testimony being nearly four months after date; and they do not agree among themselves. Take the question of Cyprus. Hardy and Cross are quite certain that Cyprus was not mentioned on March 27; but, while Hardy admits that there was a discussion about Alexandretta, Cross declares that, as the Cabinet were at that time contending for the integrity of Turkey, they could never have contemplated the dismemberment of that empire—which would, of course, have been equally begun by the seizure of Alexandretta as by that of Cyprus.[2] Northcote,

[1] These documents are all set out at length in Gathorne Hardy, vol. ii., pp. 73-77.

[2] The value of Cross's note is discounted also by a suggestion made in it, for reconciling the conflicting statements of his colleagues, that 'Lord Beaconsfield may have whispered to Lord Derby, who always sat at his left hand: "What do you say as to Cyprus?"' Now we know both from Beaconsfield's letter to the Queen (see above, p. 238) and from Hardy's diary (Gathrone Hardy, vol. ii., p. 50) that, when Derby returned to the Cabinet after his first resignation, he did not resume his old seat by his chief's side.

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however, states definitely and categorically that 'the Prime Minister . . . proposed to us the despatch of a force from India, which should occupy Alexandretta and Cyprus, and should so sever the Euphrates route and cut off the Russians from an advance on Egypt.' With this explicit corroboration of Derby's note and diary and of Beaconsfield's letters to the Queen, the question of Cyprus seems to be concluded.

The only point really open to controversy on the facts is the exact nature of the reception given by the Cabinet to Beaconsfield's proposals, other than that for the calling out of the Reserve. Hardy's recollection some months after—he tells us he has no 'record'—is that there was a discussion, and inquiries were to be made, but no action was settled. Northcote, writing more than two years afterwards, says that the matter was far too serious to be hastily decided on, though most of the Cabinet appeared to be pleased with it; and that it was accordingly laid aside. He adds that Derby, being in a state of much excitement, did not distinguish between the 'conversation' about the Indian troops and the 'decision' about the Reserve. But this minimising description is not entirely borne out by his contemporary note, already quoted, written to Salisbury during the Cabinet. Acceptance of the expeditionary policy 'in principle' is there implied; an acceptance which was reiterated by him in a letter to Derby after the July debate. 'I remember,' he wrote on July 20, 'that in the conversation I had with you immediately after the Cabinet, you asked me when the expedition would start, and that I replied, "I don't know that it will ever start at all—I for one agreed to it in principle when (or if) a conjuncture arises to make it necessary; but I don't think such a conjuncture has arisen yet, and perhaps it never will."' It is important to observe that none of the accounts suggests that there was any audible dissent, save Derby's, from Beaconsfield's proposals; and, that being so, it is difficult to maintain that there was no approval in principle.

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On the whole, there is nothing in these recollections of colleagues which seriously affects the impression derived from Beaconsfield's contemporary letters and Derby's contemporary note and diary. Memory was obviously not quite trustworthy when dealing with plans which were never completely carried out, but which met with general assent in Cabinet and for which preliminary preparations were at once put in hand. Derby, however, went perhaps somewhat beyond the actual stage arrived at, when he used in his speech the words 'decision,' 'determination,' and especially 'resolution'; and thereby gave an opportunity for a technically accurate denial. Readers will doubtless have noted that this is only the last and most serious of several misunderstandings in these years as to the exact results of Cabinet Councils;[1] misunderstandings which were almost inevitable so long as the venerable but unbusinesslike tradition was observed which forbade the preservation of minutes of the proceedings. Many will draw the conclusion that one at least of Mr. Lloyd George's constitutional reforms was long overdue—that which has established a definite record of what is done in Cabinet Councils, with a permanent secretary to keep that record.

Not only Derby's old colleagues, but the Queen strongly resented his July speech. When Her Majesty read it in the newspapers, she telegraphed from Windsor at once in cypher to Beaconsfield, 'Don't you think I should write a few strong lines to Lord Derby telling him that it was contrary to all precedent and all constitutional usage to divulge what passed in the Cabinet to which he belonged only three months ago? Ministers always ask permission to make explanations, and it will be a very dangerous precedent for the future if this is to pass unobserved.' Beaconsfield expressed his entire approval. In reply to the Queen's remonstrances, Derby pleaded Her Majesty's original permission of three months before, which he did not think could be held to be extinguished

[1] See above, pp. 95, 198.

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because it could not be acted upon at once. The Queen replied, through her secretary on July 26, that she expected that, whenever a Privy Councillor made any statement in Parliament respecting proceedings in Her Majesty's Councils, the Queen's permission to do so should be first solicited and the object of the statement made clear; and that the permission thus given should only serve for the particular instance and not be considered an open licence.

Derby, though he loyally bowed to Her Majesty's decision and never reopened the question in public, nevertheless thought that the royal intervention was not spontaneous, but was undertaken at Beaconsfield's suggestion. Here, as we have seen, he did his old friend a wrong. Her Majesty's telegram shows that she acted on her own initiative, although with Beaconsfield's approval; and the principles she laid down appear to be unimpeachable. Indeed, with the exception of giving authority for the Cabinet denial, Beaconsfield carefully avoided putting himself in any sort of personal opposition to one with whom he had been so intimate. It was Salisbury in each debate who gave the stinging reply, who launched the wounding taunt. Beaconsfield, who felt deeply the severance of the old ties, never alluded in public during this period to his former pupil and friend save in terms of respect. It was indeed a very real political loss to him to part with a colleague whose plain common sense was a wholesome corrective to his chief's daring imagination. But in the circumstances of the moment it was an inevitable loss; and indeed the Queen was right that it would have been better for the policy of the country had the resignation been offered and accepted earlier. So long as Derby remained at the Foreign Office, it was impossible for Russia to believe that the British Government would be ready to run the risk of war in order to enforce their will. It is perhaps somewhat strange that Derby should have been so anxious to bring to light what was the exact stroke of policy which

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caused his resignation, seeing that he had steadily resisted every decisive measure which Beaconsfield had proposed, outside the ordinary diplomatic course, since the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish War, only yielding occasionally at the last moment in order to avoid a break-up of the Cabinet. It was absolutely necessary to convince Russia that Great Britain and its Prime Minister were in earnest and meant what they said. The mere fact that Derby could no longer remain in the Ministry was almost as eloquent and convincing a proof of national determination as the votes for money and men, the movements of fleets and troops, and the large majorities by which these measures of precaution were sustained in Parliament. Within a very few weeks of his departure, Russia, as Beaconsfield anticipated, abandoned her unyielding attitude, and opened direct negotiations with the Power whom she had failed to bluff.

Derby's definitive resignation made way for the appointment of a successor who was to hold the seals of the Foreign Office for thirteen years in all, and to be the dominating influence in British foreign policy for the whole of the final period of the nineteenth century. The transfer of Salisbury from the India Office was followed by a number of further changes, among them Hardy's removal to the Lords as Viscount Cranbrook; and the Cabinet, which had persisted unaltered until Disraeli's acceptance of a peerage in the summer of 1876, had undergone by April, 1878, a considerable renewal and transformation. From that date till the close of the Ministry it was constituted thus:

First Lord of the Treasury ..	EARL OF BEACONSFIELD.
Lord Chancellor	EARL CAIRNS.[1]
Lord President	DUKE OF RICHMOND AND GORDON.[2]
Lord Privy Seal	DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND.

[1] Cairns was not created an Earl until September 27, 1878.

[2] Richmond received the additional Dukedom of Gordon on January 13, 1876.

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Home Secretary	RICHARD A. CROSS.
Foreign Secretary	MARQUIS OF SALISBURY.
Colonial Secretary	SIR MICHAEL HICKS BEACH.
War Secretary	COL. HON. F. A. STANLEY.
Indian Secretary	VISCOUNT CRANBROOK.
Chancellor of the Exchequer ..	SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE.
First Lord of the Admiralty ..	W. H. SMITH.
President of the Board of Trade	VISCOUNT SANDON.
Postmaster-General	LORD JOHN MANNERS.

It was still a strong Cabinet; for, though it had lost Derby, it had gained Beach and Smith, both destined in due course to lead the House of Commons. Smith had served under Disraeli's immediate observation as Secretary to the Treasury; and the chief, Lord George Hamilton tells us, had been especially struck by his rare business aptitude and sense of justice. 'Whenever there was any departmental or other difficulty of a business character which required unravelling, [Disraeli] simply said or wrote, "Refer it to Mr. Smith for his decision"; and his decision was always accepted without demur.'[1] Sandon's promotion was due to his successful conduct of the Ministerial Education Bill of 1876; and a suitable office was found for him by giving Adderley the peerage of which there was talk in the discussions about the Board of Trade in 1875.[2] Of Northumberland's appointment as Lord Privy Seal, Hardy wrote in his diary, 'a strange choice surely.' Though he had sat for many years as Lord Lovaine in the House of Commons, and had held subordinate office in the Derby-Disraeli Ministry of 1858–9, the Duke was not a leading politician. It was, no doubt, as the head of the Percies that Beaconsfield took him into his Cabinet. He had lost the head of the house of Stanley and of the younger branch of the Herberts; he himself and Cairns and Cranbrook were new men; it was not, to his mind, fitting that a Tory Cabinet should lack on its front bench in the Lords a due representation of the old families; so, to redress the balance, he added Northumberland to Salisbury and Richmond.

[1] Lord G. Hamilton's *Reminiscences*, p. 77. [2] See Vol. V., p. 395.

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In the opportunities given to young men by these changes and promotions Beaconsfield took, as ever, an especial interest.

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING ST., *April* 24, '78.—. . . The Und.-Secretary for India is Hon. Edward Stanhope, recently Secretary to the Board of Trade. He is a young man of great abilities, and a capital speaker. He entered public life early as one of your Majesty's Inspectors of Factories. He has great knowledge, much official experience, and is altogether very bright. He is succeeded as Secretary to the Board of Trade by Mr. John Talbot, also an excellent speaker, and highly cultivated. Sir Matthew White Ridley becomes Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department.

These are young men who, with George Hamilton,[1] will mount, and be faithful and most efficient servants to your Majesty in due course. . . .

[1] Who succeeded Sandon as Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education.

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CHAPTER VIII.

AGREEMENTS WITH RUSSIA AND TURKEY.

1878.

Lord Salisbury signalised his entry into the Foreign Office by the drafting and publication of a masterly despatch, which explained, and justified, to the whole world the diplomatic position of the British Government. The demand that Russia should submit the Treaty of San Stefano to the judgment of Europe was one that Derby had made as absolutely as Salisbury now made it. But it was Salisbury who drove home the reasonableness of the contention in paragraphs of luminous directness; and the active measures which the Cabinet had already taken gave a special weight to his words. Beaconsfield claimed, no doubt with truth, a share in the credit for the circular.

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING STREET, *April* 2.—. . . Lord Salisbury and Lord Beaconsfield are responsible for the circular, but it was submitted to the Cabinet, and critically examined by them.

Lord Beaconsfield thinks it does Lord Salisbury great credit, and that it will produce a considerable and beneficial effect. It is an attempt also to take the composition of important despatches out of the manufactory of the Hammonds and the Tenterdens, who have written everything, in their F.O. jargon, during the last ten years. Mr. Canning wrote his own despatches on great occasions, and also Lord Palmerston. . . .

April 3.—. . . Lord Beaconsfield assures your Majesty that he is prudent in his social movements. He never goes out in the evening, and only to such dinners where it is necessary for him to appear. There is a certain tact in the management of even great affairs which only can be acquired by feeling the pulse of society. Mr. Corry, who went everywhere, used to perform this office for him, but now he is alone!

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Lord Salisbury comes to him at eleven o'clock to consult over affairs before the Cabinet; and this is to be a regular rule without exception.

The circular has done wonders. . . .

To Lady Bradford.

10, DOWNING STREET, *April* 4, 1878.—. . . I think the circular has put the country on its legs again. I wonder what Harty-T. thinks of it.

The French dinner,[1] on Tuesday, was a menagerie, from Royalty down to a Miss Henniker! In the interval, some second-rate fashionables. I sate next to Pss. Mary. . . .

The dinner yesterday at P[ercy] Wyndham's was of an æsthetical character; Pss. Louise, De Vescis (of course), etc., etc., and Browning, a noisy, conceited poet; all the talk about pictures and art, and Raffaelle, and what Sterne calls 'the Correggiosity of Correggio.'

I dine at the Lornes' to-day in case I return in time, wh. is doubtful. . . .

Beaconsfield was justified in his satisfaction with the impression produced by the circular. Both Houses of Parliament proceeded to endorse the calling out of the Reserve, the Lords without a division, the Commons by the huge majority of 310 to 64.

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING ST., *April* 9, '78.—. . . He moved the address in answer to your Majesty's message yesterday in the Lords, and endeavoured to place clearly before the country what was the engagement Russia had entered into with the Powers, and which was the foundation, not to say cause, of their neutrality in the late war.

Lord Granville, not disputing the general accuracy of the statement, could only have recourse to critical observations of a desultory kind. . . .[2]

The debate, tho' there was no amendment, was continued till 1 o'clock a.m., and, on the whole, well sustained. Lord Salisbury spoke with vigor. Lord Beaconsfield had the privilege of a reply, on which he had counted, when he framed his original speech, but when the hour had arrived, the house, which, when he opened the discussion, was crowded in every nook and corner, with overflowing galleries and benches

[1] Apparently a dinner at the French Embassy.

[2] Here follows the passage about Derby's speech quoted on p. 273.

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entirely filled, had dwindled into two or three peers, and all the Opposition chiefs had vanished. So it was inopportune and useless. There will be other occasions. . . .

Beaconsfield's speech need not detain us. His documented review of Anglo-Russian diplomatic correspondence about the submission of Russo-Turkish agreements for European sanction, and his destructive criticism of the Treaty of San Stefano, have already been drawn upon in Chapter 7.[1] His peroration dwelt on the peculiar character of that Empire which British statesmen have in charge.

No Cæsar or Charlemagne ever presided over a dominion so peculiar. Its flag floats on many waters; it has provinces in every zone; they are inhabited by persons of different races, different religions, different laws, manners, and customs. Some of these are bound to us by the ties of liberty, fully conscious that without their connection with the metropolis they have no security for public freedom and self-government; others are bound to us by flesh and blood and by material as well as moral considerations. There are millions who are bound to us by our military sway, and they bow to that sway because they know that they are indebted to it for order and justice. All these communities agree in recognising the commanding spirit of these islands that has formed and fashioned in such a manner so great a portion of the globe. My lords, that Empire is no mean heritage; but it is not an heritage that can only be enjoyed; it must be maintained. And it can only be maintained by the same qualities that created it—by courage, by discipline, by patience, by determination, and by a reverence for public law and respect for national rights. My lords, in the East of Europe at this moment some securities of that Empire are imperilled. I never can believe that at such a moment it is the Peers of England who will be wanting to uphold the cause of their country.

The circular was well received abroad no less than at home. In particular, it made an effective appeal to the whole of the peoples interested in South-eastern Europe, except the Russians and their *protégés* the Bulgarians. The Treaty of San Stefano, overriding as it did the claims of every Balkan race save the Bulgarians, whom it aggran-

[1] See pp. 257-259.

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dised beyond measure, provoked strong local protests. Not merely the Turks, but the Greeks, the Serbians, and the Rumanians saw in it the deathblow of their hopes. Serbia and Rumania had both fought against Turkey, and Greece had only been restrained from prosecuting the invasion of Thessaly by the protests and promises of the Powers. And yet Russia imposed a solution which, on the one hand, placed large communities of Serbians and Greeks under the sway of Bulgaria, whose liberation had been effected not by her own efforts, but by Russian armies; and which, on the other hand, forced Rumania to restore to Russian rule the Rumanian population of Bessarabia that had been redeemed in 1856. Moreover, Austria and Hungary were aroused at last; and their forces were mobilised in the Carpathians in order to keep Russian pretensions within bounds. Bismarck, who in February had ostentatiously disclaimed any German interest in the Balkans, but had expressed his readiness to welcome a European Congress to Berlin and to play himself the part of an 'honest broker,' began to show increased friendliness to this country; and there was a growing tendency in French opinion to decline to support Russia in extreme courses.

In this favourable atmosphere Beaconsfield pressed forward the arrangements for that Indian expedition to the Mediterranean, which should impress the imagination of Europe in general, and Russia in particular, both with the extensive military resources and with the firm resolution of Great Britain; and which should be ready, if need be, to seize Cyprus and Alexandretta in accordance with the policy approved in principle on March 27.

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING ST., *April* 12, '78.—. . . The Cabinet considered this morning the subject of the introduction of your Majesty's Indian Army into the Mediterranean and made many arrangements. Lord Beaconsfield believes this to be a matter of supreme importance. After all the sneers of our not having any great military force, the imagination of the

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Continent will be much affected by the first appearance of what they will believe to be an inexhaustible supply of men.

Lord Derby's speech has benefited your Majesty's Government abroad. It marks still more decidedly the difference between the late and the present politics of your Majesty's advisers. All that Lord Beaconsfield devised, and contemplated, will now be carried into effect, and England already occupies again a leading and soon a commanding position.

Lord Salisbury, in every respect, is qualified for the Garter, but it would be rather premature to confer it on him at this moment. Lord Beaconsfield wishes it to be the recognition of his merits in the now impending negotiations; and when they are concluded, whether by peace or war, Lord Beaconsfield will advise your Majesty to confer on him this paramount distinction. . . .

The new Foreign Secretary found, it will be seen, immediate favour with his royal mistress; and Beaconsfield was untiring in his efforts to promote and maintain cordial relations between the Palace and the Foreign Office.

From Queen Victoria.

OSBORNE, *April* 14, '78.—The Queen is much interested by the account of the Cabinet. Most truly is Great Britain in her right position again, thanks to Lord Beaconsfield and to the departure, not an instant too soon, of Lord Derby.

Lord Salisbury keeps her continually informed of what is going on, which is an immense relief. Now that terrible strain of constant watching is over, which affected the Queen and she has no doubt Lord Beaconsfield also—from the extraordinary habit of delay and neglect which existed when Lord Derby was at the Foreign Office. . . .

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING STREET, *April* 15, '78.—Lord Beaconsfield . . . is gratified that Lord Salisbury is keeping your Majesty quite *au fait* to all that is going on. He impressed upon Lord Salisbury that, in conducting your Majesty's affairs, he was to look upon your Majesty as an exalted friend, whose support and sympathy would lighten his labors, and whose judgment would not infrequently assist them. He is a man of feeling and some imagination, and can therefore appreciate your Majesty, which the cold-blooded or the dull cannot. . . .

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The announcement that 7,000 native Indian troops were under immediate orders for Malta was made a few days before Easter, and the troops themselves arrived before the end of May. It was a final and decisive stroke. There could no longer be any doubt of the determination of the Beaconsfield Government; and Parliament, in spite of some passionate protests, steadily supported them. The policy indeed was not seriously challenged. For, though there were debates in both Houses, they turned mainly upon legal questions—the exact scope of Ministers' powers, without special sanction of Parliament, under the Mutiny Act; the exact meaning of the clause in the India Act which forbade, save on sudden or urgent necessity, the application of Indian revenues, without the previous sanction of Parliament, to military movements beyond Indian frontiers. Even out of the legal debates the life was largely taken by the consent of the Treasury to place the cost of transport on the British Exchequer. In the Commons the Government were sustained on the legal and constitutional questions by a majority of 121. In the Lords, Granville would not risk the disclosure of the barrenness of the land by taking a division, thus exposing himself to Beaconsfield's taunt: 'You will never be in a majority if your nerves are so very delicate. You must assert your opinions without fear and with perseverance; and if they are just and true and right, you will ultimately be supported by the country.' Of Parliamentary courage of this kind, Beaconsfield was himself a shining example.

To support his Parliamentary case, Beaconsfield quoted numerous precedents. He was able to show that troops had been despatched from India in the past to the Cape, the Straits Settlements, Hongkong, and Abyssinia. But these, of course, were small matters; and none of them involved service in Europe. In essentials Beaconsfield's action constituted a new policy, as wholesome as it was dramatic; though a policy springing naturally from the Queen's assumption, under his advice, of the title of

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Empress of India. He thereby established the principle, welcome to India and in the long run to Great Britain, that it is the right and duty of India to support, if necessary, by military force, even in Europe, an imperial policy undertaken for India's benefit. This great principle of imperial solidarity for defence has since Beaconsfield's day, and largely owing to the precedent which he set, taken such firm hold of the British mind, that even the Liberal Government in power at the outbreak of the Great War did not hesitate at once to bring over a powerful Indian army to fight for the imperial cause on the battlefields of France. Of the quibbles with which Liberal speeches abounded in 1878 nothing was heard in 1914. Public approval was enthusiastic and unanimous.

It was never necessary in 1878 to take the Indian troops at Malta into action in Europe or Asia Minor. Russia was at last convinced, and began to consider how far she could meet, instead of defying, the British Government. The Salisbury Circular, while unmistakable in its assertion of the right of the Powers to be consulted and in its refusal to accept the Treaty of San Stefano, had frankly admitted that, after the events of the past couple of years, large changes would be requisite in the treaties by which South-eastern Europe had hitherto been ruled. In response to this admission, Gortchakoff, while combating in detail Salisbury's arguments, invited the British Government to state not merely what it did not wish, but what it did wish. Schouvaloff, the Ambassador, immediately began to prosecute inquiries in this sense at the Foreign Office. The first negotiations, entered into on Bismarck's suggestion,[1] concerned the removal of the threat to Constantinople caused by the presence of Russian armies

[1] Northcote, in his memorandum, writes that Bismarck, after long being inscrutable, 'at length conveyed to us pretty clearly that he would support a Congress if he could be assured beforehand that it would not end in a failure; and for this purpose he was anxious that Russia and England should have some kind of understanding as to the points which each would regard as so essential that, sooner than yield on them, they would break up the Congress at the risk of bringing about war.'

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in its close neighbourhood. How matters developed and how British policy took a concrete shape appears from Beaconsfield's letters.

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING ST., [*April* 19,] '78. *Good Friday.*—. . . First he must thank your Majesty for the gracious kindness, which sent to him, shut up in a city, the only consolation under such circumstances, beautiful flowers, and of all flowers, the one that retains its beauty longest, sweet primrose, the ambassador of spring.[1]

He is much touched by your Majesty deigning to remember him in a manner full of nature and grace.

His *villegiatura* has not yet commenced, and he fears never will. First of all, he is quite alone, Sir W. Gull having again banished Mr. Corry, tho' not from England, but from London and business. Secondly, affairs are so critical at this moment, that is impossible to be absent. Lord Salisbury is at Hatfield, but he comes up every day; and indeed we are in the very pith of the most important work.

Lord Beaconsfield has the greatest hopes that, in the course of 8 and 40 hours, we shall have arranged, that the Russians shall evacuate Turkey as far as Adrianople on condition that your Majesty's fleet will return to Besika Bay. Constantinople and Gallipoli will then be in the entire and complete possession of the Sultan.

But this proposition, made by P. Bismarck, would never have been made, unless the Emperor of Russia was determined on peace, for he can make no other concession so great and complete. The next fortnight will be one of intense interest.

Northumberland[2] is not lost, but it should have been won.

Lord Beaconsfield hopes that your Majesty is well; that your Majesty is enjoying the burst of spring, and that Spithead is looking like the Mediterranean, rolling blue at your Majesty's feet.

April 21.—. . . Yesterday was an active and critical day. If we can trust Bismarck, affairs might be concluded in a manner very honorable to England, but Lord Beaconsfield has not a very strong conviction on this head; and altho' the new attitude of this country has evidently greatly affected Bismarck, and made him feel that England must have a voice in the final settlement, Lord Beaconsfield does not feel sure

[1] The Queen had written from Osborne that she sent 'some primroses picked by the Princesses and the ladies yesterday here.'

[2] A by-election which resulted in a tie. On a scrutiny the Conservative was declared elected.

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that the Prince can withstand the temptation of embroiling and exhausting both Great Britain and Russia. Otherwise, if the fleets and armies of the two nations are withdrawn from Turkey, the future arrangements scarcely seem so difficult.

If the territory south of the Balkans be restored to the Porte, Turkey may be as strong to guard the Straits, as Denmark is in a similar position.

With regard to Armenia, it would be well to propose that, if Batoum is a free port, we will not question the possession of Kars, etc., but if Batoum is to be Russian, we must occupy some island or station on the coast of Asia Minor, which will neutralise the presence of Russia in Armenia.

Lord Beaconsfield goes to Hatfield to-morrow afternoon. He could not succeed in his Wimbledon plan. . . .

These two letters were written on Good Friday and Easter Day. The crisis had come at the holiday season, just when Beaconsfield, after a long period of strain, was fondly hoping (he told Lady Bradford) to get a house out of town for a month 'somewhere near—Richmond, Roehampton, Wimbledon, that sort of thing; a pretty villa with some flowers and conifers'; 'so that I may at least sleep in the country air, which, they say, fairies favor.' With Corry still away, however, he could not face the household cares involved, and had to content himself with a short visit to Hatfield beginning on Easter Monday. It was his first real acquaintance with the Cecil family, and he enjoyed the society of his new friends.

To Lady Bradford.

10, DOWNING STREET, *Easter Sunday*, [*April* 21,] 1878.—. . . I tried to go and hear Mr. Fleming at St. Michael's to-day, Lady Macclesfield having given me her pew; but, tho' in good time, I cd. not enter the sacred precinct. I tried three doors, but found a mob, as, in old days, when the drama flourished, was found at the pit door. The church wd. not be taken—a regular Plevna; and [I] was obliged ignominiously to retreat, Fleming having of course prepared a rich discourse for my edification. . . .

I go to Hatfield to-morrow afternoon, but shall come up every day.

HATFIELD HOUSE, *April* 23.—I must write you a line, tho' I am almost incapable of doing so. I feel stunned and stupefied by, I suppose, the country air, and the unnatural

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quiet around me. I am quite unhinged; the machinery has stopped . . . I have a complete day in the country, but I doubt whether I shall repeat it. The reaction is too painful. . . .

10, Downing Street, *April* 24.—. . . I came up this morning, and am returning in an hour's time to Hatfield, where will be Münster. . . .

Nobody at Hatfield: literally the family, wh. however is large, singular, and amusing. The two girls, whom I never spoke to before, are very intelligent and agreeable; they are women, and yet not devoid of the grace of childhood, tho' highly cultivated. . . .

The weather was detestable at Hatfield, and I have had quite eno' of country air: a north-east blast, with a sprinkling of hail.

To Queen Victoria.

10, Downing St., *May* 5, '78.—. . . If Cyprus be conceded to your Majesty by the Porte, and England, at the same time, enters into a defensive alliance with Turkey, guaranteeing Asiatic Turkey from Russian invasion, the power of England in the Mediterranean will be absolutely increased in that region, and your Majesty's Indian Empire immensely strengthened.

Cyprus is the key of Western Asia.

Such an arrangement would also greatly strengthen Turkey in Europe, and altogether she would be a stronger barrier against Russia than she was before the war.

If this policy be carried into effect, and it must be carried, your Majesty need fear no coalition of Emperors. It will weld together your Majesty's Indian Empire and Great Britain. As Lord Beaconsfield is soon to have the honor of an audience of your Majesty, he will reserve this great subject until that time.

Francis Knollys[1] *to Montagu Corry.*

Hotel Bristol, Paris, *May* 7, '78.—The Prince of Wales desires me to ask you to let Lord Beaconsfield know that, since H.R.H. wrote to him, he has met Gambetta. He was at M. Waddington's evening party last night, and was presented to the Prince by Lord Lyons. They had a long conversation together, in the course of which Gambetta expressed his hearty approval of every step taken by Lord Beaconsfield in connection with the Eastern Question, and his strong dislike to

[1] Now Viscount Knollys.

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the doctrine that nations having large armies at their command might upset all treaties in defiance of protests from those concerned and contrary to public law. . . .

It was not difficult for Schouvaloff to discover from Salisbury in general terms what the British Government did wish. There was, of course, no pretension that Turkey should emerge from an unsuccessful war, largely attributable to her own obstinacy, without serious loss and serious territorial curtailment; that victorious Russia should be asked to forgo all the fruits of her lavish expenditure of blood and treasure. But from Salisbury's despatch and from Beaconsfield's speech in the Lords it was obvious that their aim was to preserve for Turkey a compact and considerable territory, with a defensible frontier, both in Europe and in Asia; to prevent Russia from securing such a territorial rearrangement as would place Turkey permanently at her mercy, and as, in particular, would give her control of Constantinople, the Straits, the Black Sea, and the route through Mesopotamia to the Persian Gulf. In other words, Russia must abandon the plan of a big Bulgaria, a Russianised province extending from the Black Sea to the Ægean and almost to the very gates of Constantinople, embracing many Greek and Serbian localities and communities, and cutting the territorial connection between the Porte and its Greek, Albanian, and Slavonic provinces; and either Batoum and the Armenian conquests of Russia in Asia must be relinquished, or the effect of their loss must be neutralised in some other fashion.

Fully apprised of the points to which Beaconsfield's Government attached vital importance, and also of the unshakable firmness of its resolution, Schouvaloff started in the second week of May for St. Petersburg in order to obtain the consent of his imperial master and of Gortchakoff to an arrangement on the British terms. Beaconsfield told him in his last conversation before parting 'that it was only fair to state distinctly that we could not, in the slightest degree, cease from our plans of

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preparation; and that they must go on, even if there were a Congress.'[1] He knew that

> The same arts that did gain
> A power, must it maintain.

It was this readiness of Great Britain for war that had brought Russia to reason. Writing to the Queen half a year later, on November 29, in regard to the change in Russian policy, Beaconsfield claimed that 'it was the confidential announcement to the Sultan, Andrassy, and Rumanian Government, that, even if we were alone, we were ready on the 3rd May to effect the withdrawal of the Russians from E. Rumelia by force, that produced this great change. The Sultan, sworn to secrecy, of course told his Greek physician; Andrassy, equally bound, of course, as we intended, revealed it to Bismarck; and Rumania, of course, to Russia.' Helped, no doubt, by Beaconsfield's frank warning, Schouvaloff's mission was on the whole successful. The Emperor and his Chancellor consented in the main to such a curtailment of the big Bulgaria as Beaconsfield demanded; but about Batoum and Kars they were stiff, and Beaconsfield had to have recourse to other means to secure his purpose.

To Queen Victoria.

10, Downing St., *May* 23, '78.—. . . No change whatever has occurred about the Cyprus scheme: but nothing could be done actively, till we saw our way, somewhat, as to Bulgaria and the European question.

Count Schouvaloff has returned. Lord Beaconsfield has not yet seen him, but Lord Salisbury's account is highly satisfactory, as regards European Turkey.

The Cabinet is to be summoned for noon to-morrow, when Lord Salisbury will make his statement, and if the Cabinet agrees, of which Lord Beaconsfield cannot doubt, a telegram (already prepared, for it is of great length) will be sent to Mr. Layard, who has been, all along, confidentially prepared for the proposal to the Porte.

No delay can be permitted in the negotiations with the Porte. We shall offer a guarantee, a British guarantee, of all

[1] Letter from Beaconsfield to the Queen, May 7.

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the Asiatic provinces to Turkey, and [we shall offer] Rumelia in Europe, tho' this, or any portion of Turkey-in-Europe, is not to be guaranteed. The result, if all be carried, as planned, into effect, will be that Turkey will still be an independent Power, with large possessions and resources. She will be as independent, and more powerful, than the Scandinavian kingdoms, and now, under the protection of England, will be the most effective, and indeed only possible barrier against an aggressive Russia.

If all is agreed to by the Cabinet, there must be an exchange of notes between Great Britain and Russia as to the terms agreed on, and a treaty or convention between Great Britain and Turkey.

With these documents we should be prepared to go into Congress, which will not be of long duration, and probably may meet in the middle of June.

May 26.—. . . He was disappointed in writing to your Majesty yesterday, not only from the bustle of the day, but because he did not feel able to place before your Majesty the state of affairs in as clear and precise a manner as was necessary.

On Thursday last Count Schouvaloff had his interview with Lord Salisbury, having arrived, himself, from St. Petersburg, the previous afternoon.

The Ambassador communicated to his Court the result of this interview in a telegram of 8 pages, and received an answer accepting all the modifications of the Treaty of S. Stefano, except one proposed by England, referring to the military occupation of Rumelia by Turkey.

All this was made known to the Cabinet on Friday, who are anxious not to press the point which was not conceded, as they are of opinion that the country would not approve of their refusing to go into Congress on a subject not of the first importance, especially when so much had been conceded.

Lord Beaconsfield not sanctioning these views, the matter is at present suspended after further discussion in the Cabinet of yesterday.

Count Schouvaloff had his interview with the Prime Minister yesterday at five o'clock.

The result of none of these negotiations will be made known at present, nor until they are formally sanctioned by the Congress. What will be made known to the country, if we come to a general agreement on all the main points, is that England has agreed to enter into the Congress to consider the Treaty of S. Stefano in all its bearings.

We have gone perfectly straight with Austria, and have agreed to support her in all her declared points of policy, except

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in insisting, that the Montenegrins shall not have the port of Antivari.

We do not think that this country could make of such a question a *casus belli*.

None of these negotiations have yet touched the Asiatic portion of the question. Nothing has, as yet, been said about Batoum and Kars, and we do not wish to enter into that till we have our answer from Constantinople about Cyprus. It may arrive to-day.

What does your Majesty think of making Mr. Roebuck a Privy Councillor? Lord Beaconsfield believes he is a true patriot, and, tho' now very advanced in age and infirmity, such a distinction from his Sovereign would approve and adorn an honorable life. Perhaps, if your Majesty does approve of this suggestion, your Majesty would be so gracious as to telegraph to Lord Beaconsfield accordingly.[1]

The Congress is now looming in the immediate distance. P. Bismarck wishes it to be a Congress without *ad referendum*, or, he says, nothing will be really done. Such a Congress must be attended by Ministers of State, who can act on their own responsibility.

Lord Salisbury urges Lord Beaconsfield himself to go, as he is the only person who can declare with authority the policy of England: what she requires and what she will grant. He is pleased to say the Continental statesmen are afraid of Lord Beaconsfield.

This is a grave issue. . . .

Beaconsfield found, as he hoped, that the Sultan was ready to allow Great Britain to occupy Cyprus in return for a guarantee of his Asiatic dominions; and, as he expected, that the Tsar was extremely indisposed to relinquish Kars and Batoum. The way was therefore clear for the agreements with Russia and Turkey which his letters to the Queen had outlined. The memorandum embodying the agreement with Russia was signed by Salisbury and Schouvaloff in London on May 30; and the Cyprus Convention with the Porte was signed by Layard and Safvet at Constantinople on June 4.

Under the memorandum Russia made a fairly complete surrender of that 'Big Bulgaria' which was the outstand-

[1] The Queen expressed approval, and Roebuck was consequently sworn of Privy Council.

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ing feature of the Treaty of San Stefano. She consented to the exclusion of Bulgaria from the Ægean coast; to the rectification of its proposed western frontiers upon the basis of nationalities, so as to exclude non-Bulgarian populations; and to its division into two provinces, separated by the Balkan range, of which only the province north of the Balkans should have political autonomy under the government of a Prince, while that south of the Balkans should receive a large measure of administrative self-government, with a Christian governor. Thus the Balkan range, and not the southern frontier of a big Bulgaria, would become the frontier of the effective Turkish empire; though the provisions as to Turkish military action in the southern province, to which Beaconsfield naturally attached great importance, were left in rather a vague condition. The Turkish army was to retreat from that province, but Turkish troops were to be allowed to re-enter to resist insurrection or invasion. Moreover, 'England reserves to herself to insist at the Congress on the right of the Sultan to be able to canton troops on the frontiers of Southern Bulgaria'—a proposition as to which Russia also reserved complete liberty for herself in the Congress discussion. The British Government further demanded that the superior officers of the militia in the province should be named by the Porte, with Europe's consent. Owing to the 'warm interest' which England felt in the cause of the Greeks, it was arranged that the Treaty of San Stefano should be modified so as to give the other Powers, and notably England, as well as Russia, a consulting voice in the future organisation of Thessaly and Epirus and the other Christian provinces under the Turkish dominion. The retrocession of Rumanian Bessarabia to Russia was accepted 'with profound regret'; but, as the other signatories of the Treaty of Paris were not prepared to fight to preserve the boundaries therein assigned to Rumania, England could not incur alone the responsibility of opposing the change.

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Thus, with the exception of Bessarabia, England secured under the memorandum nearly all the changes her Government desired in that part of the Treaty of San Stefano which affected Europe. In regard to Asia it was otherwise. Bayazid the Tsar consented to return, and he gave an assurance that there should be no further extension of the Russian frontier in Asiatic Turkey; but in regard to Kars and Batoum he continued adamant. In the text of the memorandum the Beaconsfield Government did not disguise what appeared to them to be the gravity of the decision, and at the same time gave an intimation of their own resolve to secure British interests in these regions in another fashion. These were the words used:

> In consenting not to contest the desire of the Emperor of Russia to occupy the port of Batoum and to guard his conquests in Armenia, the Government of Her Majesty do not hide from themselves that grave dangers—menacing the tranquillity of the populations of Turkey-in-Asia—may result in the future by this extension of the Russian frontier. But Her Majesty's Government are of opinion that the duty of protecting the Ottoman Empire from this danger, which henceforth will rest largely (*d'une mesure spéciale*) upon England, can be effected without exposing Europe to the calamities of a fresh war.

It is clear from this passage, as well as from his letters to the Queen, that Beaconsfield would not have sanctioned the signature of the memorandum, had he not seen his way to safeguard by other means the Asiatic dominions of the Porte. He was greatly disturbed by the power which her Armenian conquests had given Russia, not only of dominating the Black Sea, but also of attacking at will, overland, either Palestine and Egypt on the one hand, or the Baghdad route to the Persian Gulf on the other. A successful advance in either direction would be a menace to India, whose security was the principal aim of his Eastern policy. In this region, too, England must act alone. 'We had felt from the beginning of the war,' writes Northcote, 'that, while

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several nations were quite as much interested as ourselves in the results of a possible overthrow of Turkey-in-Europe, or even more so, and while we might therefore reckon on their co-operation in that part of the Empire, none of them were likely to care much what happened to Turkey-in-Asia, which to us was even more important than the other. We were convinced that Russia would try to console herself for any diplomatic defeat she might sustain in Europe, by making good terms for herself in Asia.' Russia had already shown this tendency in the negotiations which resulted in the memorandum. It was impossible, after the experience of the brittle nature of Russian pledges about Turkestan, to place much reliance on the Tsar's engagement not to extend the Russian frontier farther in Asia Minor. Hence the necessity of a convention with Turkey.

The convention was very short, containing only one operative clause. It provided that, if Russia retained Batoum, Ardahan, Kars, or any of them, the British Government would defend by force of arms the Sultan's Asiatic dominions, as demarcated by the Congress, against any fresh Russian attack. In order to be in a position to execute this engagement the English were to be allowed to occupy and administer the island of Cyprus, paying annually to the Sultan (under an annex to the Convention) the excess of income over expenditure in the island—the sum being calculated on the basis of the previous five years. Further the Sultan promised to England 'to introduce necessary reforms, to be agreed upon later between the two Powers, into the Government and for the protection of the Christian and other subjects in these [the Asiatic] territories.'

Thus was the policy of the Cabinet of March 27 in effect carried out, only with such modifications as the regained goodwill of Turkey would fortunately permit. The 'new Gibraltar' was secured by arrangement with the Sultan. The idea of Melos or Mytilene had long been abandoned, and Cyprus had been definitely selected

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as, in Northcote's words, 'a place of arms in the Levant, where our ships could lie in bad weather, and troops and stores could be held ready for action.' Situated as it is in the far north-east corner of the eastern Mediterranean, between Syria and Asia Minor, no position in that sea could be more handy for checking Russian advances on Egypt or the Persian gulf. With Cyprus occupied by consent and a defensive alliance contracted with the Porte, it was obviously unnecessary to occupy Alexandretta, the natural landing-place of troops collected in the island for the protection of Turkey-in-Asia. The choice of Cyprus was probably Beaconsfield's own. Nearly thirty years before, he had represented one of the Jerusalem gossips in *Tancred* as saying, 'The English want Cyprus, and they will take it as compensation'; but it is quite certain that, until he arranged for its acquisition, very few people in England indeed had ever cherished the slightest wish for it. To an imaginative mind, like his, which had long brooded over the problem of the Levant, the possibilities of this romantic island were familiar. He had spent a day there in 1831; but then he professed, in whimsical fashion, to find a 'land famous in all ages' more delightful as the residence of Fortunatus, in the fairy tale of *The Wishing Cap*, 'than as the rosy realm of Venus or the romantic kingdom of the Crusaders.'[1] Phœnicians and Ptolemies, Greeks and Romans, Templars and Lusignans, Venetians and Turks were among the motley throng who at one time or another had there borne sway. It must have given Beaconsfield's historical sense a real satisfaction to provide in the nineteenth century for the establishment of British administration in a land which had been won in arms in the twelfth century by Richard Cœur de Lion.

The responsibility incurred by England in giving a guarantee, against Russian attack, of the curtailed Turkish dominion in Asia, was no doubt serious. But it added very little to the responsibility which the Beaconsfield

[1] See Vol. I., p. 171.

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Government, confident of the support of public opinion, had already accepted; namely that of preventing in arms a southern advance of Russia from Armenia down the Tigris or along the Syrian coast. The two responsibilities dovetailed into each other; the same force, applied in the same direction, would go far to accomplish both aims. Moreover, Turkish dominion rested on a much firmer foundation in Asia than in Europe. In European Turkey a minority of Mohammedans kept in subjection a majority of Christian Serbs, Bulgars, and Greeks. But Asiatic Turkey was, broadly speaking, a Mohammedan country; Christian Greeks, Armenians, and others, though constituting a local majority in some districts, were on the whole largely outnumbered by the Mohammedan population. Beaconsfield never forgot that England, in India and elsewhere, was a great Mohammedan Power; and it seemed to him reasonable and natural that such a Power should be ready, where India's security was at stake, to guarantee the Mohammedan core of an empire whose ruler was the Caliph.

Not that, in signing the convention, Beaconsfield and his Cabinet showed any neglect of Christian interests in Asiatic Turkey. It was, no doubt, a comparatively small, though not unimportant, matter that the occupation of Cyprus ensured the fair treatment of the Cypriot Greeks, the large majority of the inhabitants of the island. But the convention further gave England special rights and responsibilities in regard to the whole Christian and subject population of the Asiatic territories of the Porte; and Beaconsfield and his colleagues took measures to secure that the Sultan's promises of better government and due protection should really be carried out. To this end they appointed as British military Consul-General for Anatolia Sir Charles Wilson, an engineer officer whose labours in surveying and exploring Palestine and the Sinaitic peninsula had given him a wide knowledge of Near Eastern conditions and a sympathy with the subject peoples of Asiatic Turkey. Fixing his head-

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quarters at Sivas, he divided Anatolia into four consulates, with a military vice-consul in each. For these posts young officers of promise were selected, one of them being Lieutenant H. H. Kitchener, afterwards the famous Field-Marshal. With assistants of this calibre, and full of energy himself, Wilson in less than a couple of years effected considerable improvements in local government, securing the dismissal of some of the worst Turkish officials, and making Greeks and Armenians realise that they had powerful protectors against oppression. These results could not, of course, have been obtained without the goodwill of the Porte, which was actively displayed so long as Beaconsfield was in power and so long as Layard represented Great Britain at Constantinople. But when Gladstone ousted Beaconsfield in 1880, and Goschen was sent to Constantinople to threaten and coerce rather than to offer friendly advice, the efforts of the consuls in Anatolia were largely nullified; and at length in 1882, on the pretext of the outbreak of war against Arabi, these officers were all transferred from Asia Minor to Egypt. British influence, which had been making rapid headway, disappeared from Anatolia, to be replaced almost immediately by German penetration. There was no longer any disinterested protection on the spot for oppressed Christians; and in course of time Bulgarian atrocities were reproduced on an enormously magnified scale in Armenia. Some share in the responsibility for these horrors must rest with the statesman who clamoured when in opposition for a foreign policy based on humanity, but who yet, when in power, while retaining the material gage, Cyprus, which was acquired for England by what he denounced as an 'insane covenant,' destroyed the machinery set up under that covenant for securing better government for Asiatic Christians.

Both the memorandum and the convention were preliminaries to the Congress, and were to be kept secret at least till they had served their purpose in Congress. When they became known, strong objection was taken

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both to the policy of making preliminary agreements, and to the secrecy in which they were shrouded. But, as Bismarck saw no less than Beaconsfield, it would be absurd for Powers who were in serious diplomatic conflict, threatening war, to enter into Congress without having examined the ground beforehand, and ascertained whether there was a chance of mutual understanding. A rupture in open Congress would much more certainly lead to war than a mere diplomatic difference uncomplicated by the immense publicity and the personal vanities and jealousies inseparable from a Congress. If preliminary agreements are admitted to be reasonable and in some cases inevitable, temporary secrecy follows almost as a matter of course. It has been suggested that Russia would not have signed the memorandum had she known of the convention, nor Turkey the convention had she known of the memorandum. But if both agreements were in themselves reasonable, the objection has little force in it; moreover, the suggestion is probably quite unfounded. Russia, indeed, had received in the very language of the memorandum a hint of England's resolve to take special charge of Asiatic Turkey; and there was nothing in the convention which abated a jot of Russia's material gains under the Treaty of San Stefano, as modified by the memorandum. As for Turkey, though the memorandum did not regain for her all for which she may have hoped, she owed the reconstitution of her power in Europe to British exertions; and in that reconstitution and in the guarantee of her Asiatic dominions she obtained an amply adequate return for the surrender of Cyprus—a surrender, moreover, which was entirely in the interest of her own defence.

The secrecy which Beaconsfield rightly thought important was broken, and broken in the most mischievous manner; because one instrument became known to the public without the other, and thus the world obtained a very one-sided impression of British policy, which could only be fairly appreciated on a comparison of both

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documents. Through carelessness at the Foreign Office, which put a secret paper in the power of a temporary copying clerk, the *Globe* was enabled to publish the Anglo-Russian Memorandum, just as the Congress was beginning its labours. Naturally a considerable sensation was caused by the discovery that England and Russia had come to a private agreement covering most of the points of controversy; and, in the absence of all knowledge of the Cyprus Convention, there was strong comment on the apparent surrender of British interests in Asiatic Turkey. The Government vented its vexation in somewhat random denials, and in the abortive prosecution of the clerk, Marvin, at Bow Street. This step was taken, Northcote assures us, on Salisbury's direct order from Berlin. Beaconsfield, who suspected that Cross, the Home Secretary, was responsible, rated the colleagues whom he had left at home for the fatuity of their proceedings.

To Sir Stafford Northcote.

BERLIN, *July* 2, '78.—. . . What in the name of Heaven, or rather Hell, and all the infernal regions of all religions, could have induced you all to arrest, and prosecute, that poor wretch Marvin? This is the dirtiest linen that was ever washed in public by any family on record. You will not, probably, be able to punish him, and, if you do, he will have general sympathy—this sad wretch entrusted with secrets of State with a salary of 8d. an hour! Before this we were supposed to be the not contemptible victims of an imperial misfortune; now we are ridiculous. I never was so astonished in my life, as when P. Gortchakoff gave me his telegram from London with the police examination. . . .

Throughout these spring weeks of anxious negotiation and preparation, Beaconsfield kept up his appearances in society, not without some detriment to his precarious health.

To Lady Bradford.

10, DOWNING STREET, *April* 29.—. . . I am glad you approve of the Bishop.[1] It seems a success with all 'schools of Church thought,' *alias* Church nonsense.

[1] The appointment of Maclagan, afterwards Archbishop of York, to the bishopric of Lichfield.

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May 4.—A long Cabinet, only just over, much to do in a short space, and then that terrible Academy dinner, wh. some day will be my death. Oh! how many social taxes there are worse than the income tax!

May 9.—. . . I think Gladstone's speech exceeds any of his previous performances. What do you say?

May 10.—. . . I dined yesterday at Gloster Ho.: a little round table—only Pss. Mary, and some generals, . . . but it was pretty agreeable.

To Anne Lady Chesterfield.

10, DOWNING STREET, *May* 13.—I have hardly time to write. I saw S. yesterday, who looked better. They wanted me to dine there, but I was engaged, to De la Warrs, same time. I am grateful to anyone, who asks me to an agreeable dinner on Sunday. It is a terrible day in this lone, rambling house: no secretaries to enliven the scene, scarcely a servant visible, for it's their holiday. . . .

May 15.—Forgot to tell you I went to St. Anne's, Soho, on Sunday last with Ld. Barrington. Service a little too long, but, on the whole, good. Out of the great choir of more than fifty persons, the chief performances were by a little boy, who reminded me of S.'s piping bullfinch.

Notwithstanding the ceaseless inspections of the Guards under my windows, and the magnificence of their bands, wh. are superior even to the cathedral service of the Soho Church, peace is said to be in the ascendant. England, however, goes on with its warlike preparations all the same. . . .

I dine to-day with the Clevelands, and meet the Duke of Cambridge, my warlike colleague. . . .

To Lady Bradford.

10, DOWNING STREET, *May* 16.—. . . I was obliged to leave my dinner yesterday at the Clevelands at ten o'ck., being wretchedly ill: but a vapour bath last night, and my doctor this morning, have patched me up. . . .

With the memorandum signed, the meeting of the Congress was assured. Russia had ascertained and, in the main, accepted the modifications on which England insisted in what is called in the memorandum the *Preliminary* Treaty of San Stefano; and England in return, fortified by the Cyprus Convention, had promised not to dispute the remaining terms of that treaty, if after due discussion Russia persisted in maintaining them.

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Being thus in a position to know with tolerable certainty what she must surrender and what she might hope to keep, Russia found herself able to comply with what had been England's unvarying demand, that the whole of the peace terms should be submitted to the judgment of the Congress, so that the ultimate treaty should be a genuine European pact.

The Congress would therefore meet, armed, at Bismarck's suggestion, with full powers to act without reference home. Whom should England send to this great assize at Berlin? There could be but one answer. Salisbury was unquestionably right in urging that Beaconsfield should himself act as her chief representative. Who but he could cope, face to face, with statesmen of the European reputation of Gortchakoff, Andrassy, and, above all, Bismarck? He was clearly not very difficult to persuade. So entirely did the idea of representing his country in an important international assembly fall within the scope of his political ambition, that he had even at one moment contemplated going to the Constantinople Conference. There he would have been out of place; but all considerations pointed to his attendance at Berlin, save those of age and health. The Queen, in her affectionate concern for her faithful servant, was disposed to think these drawbacks prohibitive, unless the venue of the Congress were transferred to some city much nearer England than Berlin. The Prince of Wales took an active share in promoting Beaconsfield's appointment.

The Prince of Wales to Queen Victoria.

MARLBOROUGH HOUSE, *May* 28, '78.—I had occasion to see Mr. M. Corry to-day on several matters, and in course of conversation we discussed the chances of a Congress becoming daily more likely and as to who was going to represent England. I said, of course Lord Beaconsfield was the only man who could go, as however clever Lord Salisbury undoubtedly was, still after his fiasco at Constantinople he really would not do. Then Lord Lyons is not a Cabinet Minister and if he went it would be almost an affront to Lord Odo Russell, and then he would have to refer everything home. I understand

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that P. Bismarck particularly begs that there should be no *ad referendum*.

Under these circumstances, it strikes me more forcibly than ever that the Prime Minister is not only the right man to represent us at a Congress but the only man who can go, as he would show Russia and the other Powers that we were really in earnest. . . .

It struck me that if you wrote a mem. which was to be laid before the Cabinet, in which you expressed your positive desire that Lord B. should go, the matter would then be settled. . . .

Queen Victoria to the Prince of Wales.

BALMORAL, *May* 30, '78.—. . . The subject of Lord Beaconsfield attending the Conference has been before me, and if it were to be at Brussels, The Hague, or Paris . . . I should (and I have done so) urge it, but you know that Lord Beaconsfield is 72 and ½,[1] is far from strong, and that he is the firm and wise head and hand, that rules the Government, and who is my great support and comfort, for you cannot think how kind he is to me, how attached! His health and life are of immense value to me and the country, and should on no account be risked. Berlin is decidedly too far and this is what I have said. I wrote to him on the subject two days ago, and have not had an answer yet. . . .

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING ST., *May* 31, '78.—Lord Beaconsfield . . . could not 'answer about attending the Conference,' for nothing had been sufficiently settled to place before your Majesty until to-day.

There is no possibility of changing the venue of the Congress. As the Prime Ministers of the other Powers will represent their respective States, we must not employ, for that purpose, mere professionals. Men like Bismarck treat them with little consideration, as they fancy, or choose to fancy, that they know nothing of the real feelings of the country that sends them.

What we propose for your Majesty's consideration is, that your Majesty should be represented at the Congress by your Majesty's chief Minister and also by your Majesty's Secretary of State. Lord Beaconsfield will travel to Berlin by himself and with his personal suite, and he will take four days for this operation, so that he will arrive quite fresh. Then, he will

[1] He was really 73½.

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have interviews with all the chief statesmen, so that there will be no mistake as to the designs, and the determination, of this country. Lord Beaconsfield proposes to attend the first meetings of the Congress, and exhibit his full powers, and then return to England, leaving Lord Salisbury to complete all the details of which he is consummate master.

Lord Salisbury highly and entirely approves of this arrangement, which will prevent all mischievous and malignant rumors of two parties in the Cabinet, and will, as he is pleased to say, give great weight and authority by the presence of Lord Beaconsfield to the proposals and policy of your Majesty's Government.

From Queen Victoria.

BALMORAL, *May* 31.—. . . The Queen again cyphered about Lord Beaconsfield's going to the Congress if it takes place. There is no doubt that no one could carry out our views, proposals, etc., except him, for no one has such weight and such power of conciliating men and no one such firmness or has a stronger sense of the honour and interests of his Sovereign and country. If only the place of meeting could be brought nearer!

On June 1 the Cabinet definitely decided to enter the Congress, and appointed Beaconsfield and Salisbury as British Plenipotentiaries, with whom was associated Odo Russell, the Ambassador in Berlin. Beaconsfield's final arrangements for his journey, his provision for carrying on the Government at home in his absence, and the spirit and hopes with which he entered the Congress, sufficiently appear from his letters to the Queen before his departure.

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING ST., *June* 3, '78.—Lord Beaconsfield . . . has just received your Majesty's telegram of this morning. Lord Salisbury has, he believes, communicated to your Majesty, why we did not insist on the removal of the Russian army before the Conference took place.

We never made a *sine qua non* of this condition, because it also involved the withdrawal of the British fleet. But we insisted strongly on the point, because the policy was proposed by P. Bismarck, and we thought he might have been offended by its withdrawal.

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Lord Beaconsfield believes that some communication has taken place with the German Chancellor, and that the withdrawal of the Russian army will be the first question which Congress will have to discuss.

Lord Beaconsfield contemplates departing on Saturday and arriving in four days at Berlin. Lord Salisbury will quit London on Tuesday night and travel all through.

Lord Beaconsfield will travel with Mr. Corry, a fair linguist in more than one tongue, and his personal attendants. There will also be immediately attached to him his second private secretary, Mr. Algernon Turnor, to attend to home business, as it arrives and accrues, and Mr. Austin Lee (of the Foreign Office), who is an accomplished linguist and experienced in affairs. They will follow Lord Beaconsfield, and the mass of the Embassy will arrive with Lord Salisbury.

Three years ago or so Lord and Lady Salisbury prepared a fête of great splendor at Hatfield in honour of their guests, the Crown Prince and Princess of Germany. Four thunderstorms destroyed everything except Hatfield House itself.

The Crown Princess, remembering that day of magnificent disaster, expressed on this occasion her wish to pass two days at Hatfield in comparative quiet.

Nothing could be more complete than the reception, on which the sun never ceased to smile, but the Fates had decided against a tranquil visit, and the party was broken up in alarmed disorder.[1]

June 7.—. . . Your Majesty must pardon a somewhat rambling despatch, but really until your Majesty appointed him your Majesty's Plenipotentiary, he had no idea how many things there were to do, and how many persons to see, and all in so short a time!

The treaty with Turkey is so drawn, that it will fall to the ground in the case of Russia not taking Batoum and surrendering Kars: and this will be clearly placed and strongly urged when the occasion offers. If Russia chooses to retain her prey, Lord Beaconsfield has no fear but that our country will approve of, and sanction, the Cyprus policy.

He has arranged, subject to your Majesty's sanction, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should be the Minister in general communication with your Majesty. It adds, in his case, to great labors and responsibilities, but he is the Minister who, from the variety of his knowledge of what is going on, will be most qualified to inform and assist your Majesty. . . .

Lord Beaconsfield was tempted to take the gorgeous fish with him to Berlin and feed the Congress, which it could well

[1] By the attempt of Nobiling on the German Emperor's life.

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do, but, on soberer reflection, he has been persuaded to dine on a small portion of it this evening, and his housekeeper, who is a countrywoman of Mr. Brown, is to kipper (he thinks that is the word) the great mass, so he will breakfast on it when he returns, and so he will be under a double obligation to its skilful captor, and owe two meals to your Majesty's faithful attendant.

There was a Cabinet to-day settling and completing the instructions of the Plenipotentiaries. It was a satisfactory Cabinet. They are to meet twice a week as usual, and as often besides as they like, so that the country may not consider them as 'cyphers.'

He will observe all your Majesty's commands about writing and telegraphing.[1] He is not too sanguine as to the result, but shall do his utmost to achieve success. In all his troubles and perplexities, he will think of his Sovereign Lady, and that thought will sustain and inspire him.

June 8.—. . . Your Majesty's box this instant arrived as he was about to write a few last lines to Balmoral.

The Socialist movement[2] requires the utmost vigilance and preparation. The moment we have concluded our treaty, we must give up our whole mind to it.

Lord John Manners, the most faithful of colleagues, and one of the best of men, errs in one respect. He views the pending negotiations as if they referred to a Treaty of Peace between Great Britain and Russia. That would be comparatively very easy work: but, in truth, we are only critics of a treaty between two other Powers and their belligerents, and we must take care not to be in the position of maintaining our own opinions by withdrawing from the negotiations. The other Powers might persist in their labors, and arrive at a settlement without us.

He will not now dwell upon these great affairs, as in three hours he departs, and is distracted by many claims and calls. These are literally his last lines, addressed to one whose imperial courage has sustained him in immense difficulties, whose kindness has softened labor, and who possesses the utmost devotion of his brain and heart.

[1] The Queen had asked for frequent telegrams and letters, both about Beaconsfield's health and about the progress of the Congress. If he could not write or telegraph himself, Her Majesty hoped Corry or Salisbury would do so.

[2] The Queen had written anxiously about the developments of the Socialist movement in Germany.

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CHAPTER IX.

The Congress of Berlin.

1878.

The Congress of Berlin, with its resulting treaty, is a landmark in the diplomatic history of the nineteenth century; but of the real value and importance of its work there have been very varying appreciations. One thing, however, is certain. It marked the zenith of Beaconsfield's career. It revealed him finally to the world as a great international figure; a statesman capable of reducing for the moment the redoubtable Bismarck himself to a secondary place in a European assembly held in Bismarck's own capital. Here were gathered, to name only the principal actors—for Russia, Gortchakoff, the wily Chancellor, suffering now from the infirmities of age, and jealous of his brilliant second, Schouvaloff; for Austria-Hungary, Andrassy, the Magyar statesman, who restored, temporarily at least, the tarnished prestige of the Hapsburg Empire, accompanied by Karolyi, afterwards popular in London as Austrian Ambassador; for France, the Anglo-Frenchman Waddington, a product of English education and French commerce, a blend of archæologist and statesman; for Italy, Corti; for Turkey, Carathéodory; for Great Britain, along with Beaconsfield, Salisbury,[1] destined to loom large in the world's eyes as the century waned, and Odo Russell, the experienced diplomatist; while Bismarck, the President of the Congress, was supported by the distinguished names of Hohenlohe and Bülow, one a future Chancellor of the

[1] With Salisbury as private secretary was Mr. Arthur Balfour, so that both Beaconsfield's successors as Conservative Prime Ministers were present with him at Berlin.

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Photo, Russell, Southsea.

BENJAMIN EARL OF BEACONSFIELD.

Photographed at Osborne by the Queen's command, July 22, 1878.

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German Empire, the other the father of a future Chancellor[1] and himself Minister of State. Among all these renowned and forceful personalities, one figure stood out pre-eminent. He arrested attention immediately by a strange and picturesque distinction of personal appearance; he enforced respect and achieved a diplomatic success by the manifestation of a clear purpose, a dexterous intellect, and an inflexible will. The Empress Augusta wrote to Queen Victoria before the end of June that she could clearly see that Beaconsfield formed the real centre of the Congress and represented the greatest authority there. The general voice of the Plenipotentiaries would readily have echoed, before they had sat many days, the historic words in which Bismarck expressed his own estimate: 'Der alte Jude, das ist der Mann' ('the old Jew, that is the man').

The personal impression which Beaconsfield made on his fellow-Plenipotentiaries was heightened by the practice, which he followed throughout, of addressing the Congress, not in the usual language of diplomacy, French, but in his native English. This was not his original intention, and Odo Russell was fond of relating how the change was brought about. The story has been often printed, and has been told in recent years, with some variations of detail, in Redesdale's *Memories*, ch. 35, and in G. W. E. Russell's *Portraits of the Seventies*. Corry and the other secretaries were horrified lest, by speaking, as he proposed, in French, their chief should become the laughing-stock of Europe. They knew that, in spite of a couple of winters spent in Paris in middle life, his French was so completely of the Stratford-atte-Bowe type that he pronounced the French word for 'grocer' as if it rhymed with 'overseer.' They dared not remonstrate with him themselves, but applied to the Ambassador, who was accustomed to deal with delicate situations, for his help. It was the evening before the Congress met, and Odo Russell caught the great man as he was retiring to bed.

[1] Who was present at the Congress in a subordinate capacity.

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A dreadful rumour, he said, had reached him, that Beaconsfield would address the Congress next day in French. That would be, said Lord Odo, a very great disappointment to the Plenipotentiaries. 'They know that they have here in you the greatest living master of English oratory, and are looking forward to your speech in English as the intellectual treat of their lives.' Beaconsfield gravely promised to give the matter due consideration; and the result of a night's reflection was that he used English in Congress next morning and always afterwards. Lord Odo, Redesdale tells us, was wont to declare that he never knew whether Beaconsfield took the hint or accepted the compliment.

The British Prime Minister came to Berlin with the prestige of the statesman who had determined the basis on which alone the Congress could assemble. All the terms of the Treaty of San Stefano must be submitted to the judgment of Europe—such had been throughout the claim which his Cabinet had put forward. He had made it clear that, rather than accept Russia's Eastern settlement, England was, in the last resort, prepared to fight. Accordingly other Governments had followed England's lead, and Russia had capitulated. 'England,' Disraeli's sometime Radical foe, Roebuck, said, 'now holds as proud a position as she ever held; and that is due to the sagacity, and power, and conduct of the despised person once called Benjamin Disraeli, but now Lord Beaconsfield.' 'You would hardly believe,' wrote Sir Henry Elliot to Beaconsfield from Vienna on June 11, 'the change in the position of England in Continental estimation that has been operated within the last two months; but it would be gratifying to those who have brought it about if they could see it as much as we do, who live abroad.' Bismarck's opening words in Congress, as President, registered Beaconsfield's success. The object, he said, for which the Congress was assembled, was to submit the work of San Stefano to the free discussion of the Governments which signed

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the treaties of 1856 and 1871. 'La Russie est sur la sellette,' is the caustic expression in which M. Hanotaux[1] sums up the situation.

Moreover, Beaconsfield and Salisbury came prepared in a sense in which no other attendants at the Congress were prepared. They had concluded an agreement on essentials with their principal opponent, Russia; they had supplemented this agreement by a convention with Turkey, Russia's defeated foe; they had achieved an understanding with Austria, whose geographical position and prudent reserve must give her an enormous influence in Balkan arrangements; and they were on excellent terms with France and Italy. The policy of Germany was a mystery. Whom would she favour, Russia or England? She would be very loth to irritate her great Eastern neighbour, with whom her relations were those of ostentatious intimacy; at the same time it was essential to keep Austria, now recovering from her humiliation in 1866, in line with the German movement. It was not without significance that, in consequence of the recent serious attack on his life, the Emperor William was incapacitated during the sittings of the Congress for the performance of his State duties; and that the royal and imperial welcome and hospitalities to the Plenipotentiaries had to be undertaken on his behalf by the Crown Prince as regent. By position and temperament the Emperor William was disposed to attach peculiar importance to the preservation of close relations with his brother autocrat at St. Petersburg. The Crown Prince, himself of mildly liberal tendencies, and the devoted husband of an accomplished English princess, naturally inclined rather to a system of co-operation with England. In these circumstances both Bismarck and Beaconsfield felt the advisability, if not of a preliminary understanding, at least of a preliminary conversation in which soundings could be taken. It was not delayed.

[1] See two articles on the Berlin Congress by M. Hanotaux in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, September 15 and October 1, 1909.

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Beaconsfield journeyed to Berlin in the leisurely manner which he had indicated to the Queen, spending four days on the way. He left London on Saturday, June 8, with Montagu Corry and his own personal attendants, and (he told Lady Chesterfield) 'with couriers *en avant*, who will arrange about hotels and beds and other botherations.' He crossed the Channel that afternoon, the passage being 'as still as the Dead Sea itself,' and slept at Calais. Next day, Sunday, he travelled no farther than Brussels where, as he wrote to Queen Victoria, 'the King and Queen of the Belgians entertained him right royally. Lord B. sate between them at their banquet, and was struck and gratified by the considerable culture, and the quiet good taste, of the Queen.' Monday night was spent at Cologne, and, as the result of this unhurried progression, he reached Berlin at 8 o'clock on Tuesday evening (June 11) 'as fresh as if he was taking his seat in the House of Lords.' He took up his quarters, not at the British Embassy, but at an hotel, the Kaiserhof.

It was fortunate that he was fresh, as Bismarck at once proposed a personal meeting. Beaconsfield, realising the full importance of seeing the Chancellor before the other Plenipotentaries, due on the morrow, arrived, went to his house the same evening after dinner.

To Queen Victoria.

BERLIN, *June* 12, 1878.—. . . [Lord Beaconsfield] arrived here last night about 8 o'clock and while dining received a visit from the chief secretary of Prince Bismarck inviting an immediate visit. Accordingly, at a quarter to ten o'clock Lord Beaconsfield waited on the Chancellor. They had not met for sixteen years; but that space of time did not seem adequate to produce the startling change which Lord B. observed in the Chancellor's appearance. A tall, pallid man, with a wasplike waist, was now represented by an extremely stout person with a ruddy countenance, on which he is now growing a silvery beard. In his manner there was no change, except perhaps he was not quite so energetic, but frank and unaffected as before. He was serious throughout an interview

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which lasted one hour and a quarter, and apparently sincere. He talked a great deal, but well and calmly: no attempt at those grotesque expressions for which he is, or has been, celebrated.

The interview was not unsatisfactory, and Lord B. arrived at the conclusion that the Prince was anxious for a peaceful settlement. He suggested to Lord B. that, as, probably, President of the Congress, he should, in his initial speech on Thursday, group the questions according to their importance, and that he should like to begin with Bulgaria, as perhaps the most weighty, 'Tho' we need not avoid a single article of the Treaty of San Stefano, if we took them in their regular order, many days, and the freshness of the Congress, would be expended on such insignificant topics as the port of Antivari, "a cavern in a rock," and the borders of Montenegro and Servia, and places of which no one ever heard before this war. All these concern Austria and he wished to serve Austria, but Austria is not going to war with Russia. Let us therefore deal with the great things that concern England, for England is quite ready to go to war with Russia.' . . .

The order of business which Bismarck proposed was in itself reasonable; and it was thoroughly congenial to Beaconsfield, who regarded the undoing of that provision of the Treaty of San Stefano which constituted the new Bulgaria as the most urgent and indispensable duty of the Congress. Before, however, coming to grips with this vital question on the following Monday at the second session, there was much inevitable formality, including the formal opening of the Congress on Thursday the 11th, and many receptions, including a week-end visit to the Crown Prince and Princess at Potsdam. Beaconsfield was indefatigable, throughout these early days, in making himself acquainted with the personalities of the statesmen with whom he had to deal, in gauging their purposes and their power to enforce them. We possess happily very full evidence of the impression which the Congress and its characters, its negotiations and its festivities, produced on his mind. Besides writing numerous letters to the Queen, describing his actions and experiences, he also kept a diary for Her Majesty, which he forwarded to her in instalments, and for which

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he apologised as 'rough notes,' 'rough journal for One Person only.' He reported, moreover, at intervals to Northcote, as acting head of the home Government; and, of course, the Berlin visit did not interrupt the correspondence with Lady Bradford and Lady Chesterfield, though his letters to these ladies often merely reproduced the phraseology of those to the Queen. From the diary and the letters to the Queen it has been possible, by a little dovetailing and rearrangement, to compile a fairly continuous narrative in his own words, the extracts from the letters being indicated by the letter *L* and those from the diary by the letter *D*; supplementing this narrative occasionally by his letters to his other correspondents. Here is the story of the opening days.

To Queen Victoria.

L. BERLIN, *June* 12.—The Congress will certainly meet to-morrow, but the non-arrival of the Turkish envoys, who have been shipwrecked in the Black Sea, may retard decisions, as there would be scandal in coming to any absolute conclusions in their absence.

Lord B. had an audience of State from the Crown Prince this morning[1] at ½ past three o'clock. The Prince received himself and Lord Salisbury at that hour; the other Ambassadors at four.

Count Andrassy, Prince Hohenlohe, and ultimately Schouvaloff, thinking that Lord B. was not going to the Palace until four o'clock, all called as he was on the point of girding on his sword, and would come up tho' it was only 'serrer la main.' Count Andrassy is a picturesque-looking person, but apparently wanting calm. He expressed his determination to stand by England, and said, had we known each other sooner, affairs would have been more satisfactory. He is to call on Lord B. to-morrow morning, so as to have a full conversation before the Congress.

Lord B. and Lord S. were received by the Prince at ½ past three, and were ushered at once into the closet by the Master of the Ceremonies, without the form of presentation.

The others were received at four o'clock, and were all formally presented. The English Ambassadors were half an hour with the Crown Prince in easy and agreeable conversation. It was like a continuance of the Hatfield visit. The manner

[1] Used for 'afternoon,' as in 'morning call,' '*matinée*.'

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of the Crown Prince singularly natural and cordial. His remarks full of sense, and not devoid of humor.

The Crown Prince and Princess have showered kindnesses on Ld. B. during his visit to Berlin, and what makes them more delightful is, that he feels they must be, in no slight degree, owing to the inspiration of one to whom he owes everything. He found a most fanciful basket of flowers on his arrival, so vast that it nearly covered the table, and crowned with a bed of delicious strawberries environed with orange flowers and roses.

After his 'gala' audience he paid a visit to the Crown Princess; a very agreeable one. He was pleased by her second son, a young sailor about to sail for Japan; a spirited youth with a frank, merry countenance.[1]

In the evening he dined at the British Embassy, one of the finest mansions in Berlin: a quiet party.

He hopes his most beloved Sovereign is well and happy. Distant from your Majesty in a foreign land, and with so awful a responsibility, he feels more keenly than ever, how entirely his happiness depends on his doing his duty to your Majesty, and on your Majesty's kind appreciation of his efforts.

He heard by tel. from the D. of Cambridge this morning of the death of the King of Hanover at Paris. It was not known here until he mentioned it at Court to the Crown Prince.

June 13.—Count Andrassy called on him by appointment this morning at eleven o'clock, and remained upwards of an hour. He covered the floor with maps, and his chief object seemed to be to persuade Lord B. that the line of the Balkans, which he had signed a memorandum to support, was inferior to another one which he was anxious should be substituted for it. Lord B. thought that, the question being once settled, it had better not be disturbed. In truth, common persons understand what the line of the Balkans means, but the complications of Count Andrassy, all arising out of little interests and obscure influences of his own, would only convey an impression, that we were surrendering something intelligible and substantial.

At two o'clock the Congress met in the Radetsky Palace—a noble hall just restored and becoming all the golden coats and glittering stars that filled it.[2] Ld. B. believes that every day is not to be so ceremonious and costumish. P. Bismarck, a giant, 6 feet 2 at least, and proportionately huge, was chosen President. In the course of the morn. P. Gortchakoff,

[1] Prince Henry of Prussia.

[2] 'The hall is, I think, too large for business,' wrote Beaconsfield to Lady Bradford. 'At least no one's voice, except my own, was, I understand, heard.'

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a shrivelled old man, was leaning on the arm of his gigantic rival, and, P. Bismarck being seized with a sudden fit of rheumatism, both fell to the ground. Unhappily, P. Bismarck's dog, seeing his master apparently struggling with an opponent, sprang to the rescue. It is said that P. Gortchakoff was not maimed or bitten thro' the energetic efforts of his companion.

The business of the Congress was chiefly formal, except that Lord B. brought forward the question of the retirement of the Russian troops from Constantinople, which, after some discussion, was adjourned till Monday, when the Congress meets again. The P[leni] P[otentiaries] are arranged at the table according to the letters of the alphabet—Austria first, and so on. Lord B. sate between the 3rd Austrian P.P. and Lord Salisbury.

At seven o'clock was a gala banquet at the old Palace: a scene of extraordinary splendor. It is a real Palace, but, strange to say, all the magnificent rooms and galleries of reception are where, in the days of Queen Anne, poor poets used to reside: the garrets. It must have been much more than 100 steps before Lord B. reached the gorgeous scene, and he thinks he should have sunk under it, had not, fortunately, the Master of the Ceremonies been shorter-breathed even than himself, so there were many halts of the caravan.

It was, on the whole, the most splendid scene that Lord B. ever witnessed. The banquet was in the White Hall. The costumes were singularly various and splendid. Lord B. sate between Count Andrassy and the Russian Ambassador (Count Schou.) and Andrassy was next to Bismarck. All were opposite the Royal Family. The Crown Princess encouraged him by many kind glances, and the C. Prince and Princess drank to the health of the Queen of England, which Lord B. acknowledged with some agitation. It was the health of one of whom he was almost always thinking. After the banquet, the guests assembled in the gallery. He made the acquaintance of the Gd. Duke and Duchess of Baden, the father, and the grandfather of our future Princess,[1] and many other notables. In appearance, the grandfather is a remarkable man: he said he was nearly eighty, but he looked scarcely its moiety. Lord B. mistook His Royal Highness for the father of the bride, who soon appeared as 'The Red Prince.'

The Duke of Connaught, in consequence of the death,[2] did not dine at the White Hall and, therefore, his *fiancée* declined, tho' her sister, and P. Henry of the Netherlands, were present.

[1] The late Duchess of Connaught, daughter of Prince Frederick Charles of Prussia, 'the Red Prince.'

[2] Of the King of Hanover.

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But after dinner, the Duke of Connaught invited Lord B. to visit him at the Palace of the Crown Prince, and there introduced him to his bride. Lord B. told her Royal Highness that your Majesty was a little jealous of my seeing her first, which amused them. The Crown Princess was present, and we passed half an hour in merry talk.

June 14.—This morning he had a long interview by request with Count Schouvaloff, who, it appears, was rather frightened by the tone, or reported tone, of Lord B. The point was respecting the political and military control by the Sultan over the southern province of Bulgaria. The Russians propose that the Sultan should not be permitted to employ his own army in the government of this part of his dominions. This is outrageous, and to give the Sultan the line of the Balkans for his frontier, and not permit him to fortify and defend them, is monstrous and a gross insult to England. Lord B. spoke thunder about it. It will be given up by St. Petersburg.

Afterwards, an interesting visit to the Empress. She was very kind, remembered Lord B. at Windsor, and her last words to him at the Duke of Cambridge, etc., etc.

D. NEUES PALAIS, POTSDAM, *June* 16.—Arrived here yesterday afternoon. A most kind reception, and every comfort. Charming suite of rooms, in one of which Crown Prince born, and fire in every chamber. So much care about my not taking cold, that I sometimes fancy, on this and other occasions, that a benignant, tho' distant, influence deigns to guard over me.

Palace, described by Lord Malmesbury in his journals as the most hideous of existing structures, pleased me: probably the last erection of the Rococo: reminded me a little of the Palace at Wurzburg. Lord Salisbury was my companion, and we dined alone with the Crown Princess and Her Imp. Highness's immediate attendants. Conversation animated—as Dr. Johnson would say, 'good talk.'

Before I went down to Potsdam, I had, by his invitation, an interview with Prince Bismarck, which lasted upwards of an hour. What his object was, or is, I have not yet discovered. There was no business done: it was a monologue; a rambling, amusing, egotistical autobiography. As His Highness had requested the interview, I would not open on any point. Lord Salisbury, equally invited, had an audience almost immediately after me, and of the same surprising character. Lord Odo had warned me, that the interview would probably be to ascertain how squeezable I was with respect to Russia—my interview with Count Schouvaloff having alarmed that personage. But not a word of business from Prince Bismarck, either to Lord Salisbury or myself. Perhaps when he made

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the appointments he had counted on having certain proposals from Russia, which, however, were not ready.

Before interview with Ct. [*sic*] Bismarck, had a long one with Carathéodory, the 1st Turkish Plenipotentiary, a perfect Greek of the Fanar: good-looking, full of finesse, and yet calm and plausible: a man of decided ability.

This morning at eleven we took a delightful drive with the Crown Princess and saw the famous orangery and Sans Souci with all its fountains playing. Sans Souci was one of the places I always wished to see, and never expected. It was deeply interesting, and the library of the great man[1] highly characteristic. I was prudent, and declined the afternoon drive to Babelsberg, and instead am writing this and many other things.

There is to be a grand banquet here this evening to the English Mission and the Royal Family. The Crown Prince, who came down from Berlin, paid me a visit in my rooms, which has just finished, and we all return by a special train, and the Congress meets to-morrow at two o'clock.

BERLIN, *June* 17.—The banquet yesterday was bright and agreeable in a splendid Rococo hall, which would have driven old Lord Malmesbury, with his frigid Ionic taste, quite crazy. I sate next to the *fiancée* of our English Prince, and having made only a superficial observation before, with my poor near-sight, determined to profit by the opportunity, as if I were 'our own correspondent.' She is delicate and has an extremely interesting appearance and quite pretty. She has a beautiful complexion, a fine brow, lovely eyes, a short upper lip, and singularly beautiful hands. Confirmed in my first impression, that she was not, as reputed, shy but extremely modest; but calm and quite self-possessed. She conversed freely and most naturally. All her remarks were sensible; her inquiries, as to her new home, pertinent and in good taste. I should say of a sympathising, affectionate nature, and winning from her innocence and gentleness of manner. I think she will be a source of happiness to my beloved Sovereign, and adorn and animate the Royal circle.

On Monday, June 17, the real business of the Congress began, with the question of the constitution of the new Bulgaria; and, before the week was over, Beaconsfield, after a short but severe struggle, had imposed his will, and secured the solution he demanded. The Schouvaloff memorandum was by this time public property, but

[1] Frederick the Great.

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Beaconsfield did not allow himself to be disturbed by this vexatious revelation. 'The publication,' he wrote to Northcote, 'was, and is, a mortifying incident, but it can only injure us with our own friends at home, and it is to be hoped that what we are doing here will, when fairly known, remove all this annoyance. The publication was calculated to injure us with Austria and Turkey, but we had made our book with Austria, and Turkey is in our pocket. People here never mention Batoum or questions of that calibre. There is only one thought—Bulgaria. The sixth article of the Treaty of S. Stefano is the real point for which the Congress is assembled. . . Upon its treatment depends whether there shall be a Turkey-in-Europe or not.' Under the memorandum it will be remembered that, while Russia consented to the division of Bulgaria into two provinces, of which only the northern should have political autonomy but the southern should remain as a portion of Turkey with a large measure of self-government, she did not accept, but remitted to the Congrees, the British contention that the Sultan should have full military rights in this southern province, and especially the right to canton troops on its frontiers. Beaconsfield had hesitated about going into Congress at all with this important point unconceded; he was determined now to obtain it, and had already spoken 'thunder' about it to Schouvaloff. His claim was that the province south of the Balkans should be under the political and military control of the Sultan, and that it should be known by the name of Eastern Rumelia. Let us see how he described this eventful week to the Queen.

To Queen Victoria.

D. June 17.—Second meeting of Congress. Boundaries of Bulgaria treated by P. Bismarck as the most important question before Congress, and the most difficult.

The 6th article of the Treaty of San Stefano being read, the English P.P. proposed two resolutions.

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1. That the chain of the Balkans should be the new frontier of Turkey.

2. That in the country south of the Balkans, the Sultan should exercise a real political and military power.

The Russian P.P. disputed both these propositions: recommended a division of Bulgaria by a longitudinal line, and that the Turkish troops should not be permitted to enter the province, which the Russian P.P. styled 'South Bulgaria.'

After discussion, P. Bismarck adjourned the question till Wednesday, remarking that, in the interval, the Powers most interested should confer together. This is the system on which His Highness manages the Conference, and it is a practical one. All questions are publicly introduced, and then privately settled.

In the afternoon at 6 o'clock great dinner at P. Bismarck's. All these banquets are very well done. There must have been sixty guests. The Princess was present. She is not fair to see, tho' her domestic influence is said to be irresistible. I sate on the right of P. Bismarck and, never caring much to eat in public, I could listen to his Rabelaisian monologues: endless revelations of things he ought not to mention. He impressed on me never to trust Princes or courtiers; that his illness was not, as people supposed, brought on by the French War, but by the horrible conduct of his Sovereign, etc., etc. In the archives of his family remain the documents, the royal letters, which accuse him after all his services of being a traitor. He went on in such a vein that I was at last obliged to tell him that, instead of encountering 'duplicity,' which he said was universal among Sovereigns, I served one who was the soul of candor and justice, and whom all her Ministers loved.

The contrast between his voice, which is sweet and gentle, with his ogre-like form, striking. He is apparently well read, familiar with modern literature. His characters of personages extremely piquant. Recklessly frank. He is bound hand and foot to Austria [? Russia], whether he thinks them right or wrong: but always adds 'I offered myself to England, and Lord Derby would not notice my application for 6 weeks and then rejected it.'

Afterwards a reception at Lady Odo's.

June 18, *Waterloo Day.*—At twelve o'clock to-day, Count Schouvaloff and Baron d'Oubril for Russia, Count Andrassy and Baron de Haymerle for Austria, Lord B. and Lord Salisbury for England, met on the two English resolutions.

I introduced the matter fully, and in the same decided tone in which I had previously in a long interview addressed Count Schouvaloff. He, with little hesitation, tho' with regret, announced that he accepted the line of the Balkans, but the

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second resolution was so serious, that he could not act on his powers, but must refer to the Emperor. Throughout the discussion Austria entirely supported England; it lasted four hours, wh. were nearly the severest four hours I can well recall.

Much mortification among Russians at our understanding with Austria. I declared the English proposals as to what is called 'Delimitation of Bulgaria' an ultimatum. Consternation in the Russian camp.

At half-past five I called on Prince Gortchakoff at his desire, and had a most important conversation with him.

June 19.—An anxious day. The Congress met, but did nothing, as Count Schouvaloff had received no instructions.

Banquet at the Italian Ambassador, Count de Launay. I sate next to Count Corti. Knowing my man: that he was a favourite of Bismarck, who talked freely to him, and that, as the Ambassador of an almost neutral State, he had the ear of everyone, I told him, in confidence and as an old friend, that I took the gloomiest view of affairs, and that, if Russia would not accept our proposals, I had resolved to break up the Congress.

June 20.—On this day, by appointment, Great Britain, Austria and Russia met again at our Ambassador's, when Count Schouvaloff stated that they had been unable by telegraphic communication to arrive at any results, and that the Russian P.Ps. had despatched a Colonel to St. Petersburg, and that his return might possibly occur on Friday evening.

L. Russia has asked for 4 and 20 hours for the Emperor's answer, as they have not sufficient powers in regard to this important point and have been obliged to send an envoy to St. Petersburg. I have no fear about the result, as I have intimated in the proper quarter, that I shall break up the Congress if England's views are not adopted. When this change in the Treaty of San Stefano occurs Russia will be again entirely excluded from the Mediterranean, the object of the last, and all their wars. Much attention is now paying to Greece.

The Congress continues to make progress, and P. Bismarck wants much to take the waters of Kissingen, and sometimes dreams of finishing in a few days: but Greece, the Straits, Batoum, and some others, are massy matters.

P. Bismarck's plan is, when we have settled all the great questions, to execute a treaty to that effect, and to leave to a local commission consisting of the resident Ambassadors, and some experts, the research and settlement of what he calls the little questions, involving no great political interest or divergence of general opinion. When these are satisfactorily

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arranged, they will probably be annexed to the Treaty of *Haute Politique* which the P.Ps. will have previously executed.

The great heat has been favorable to Lord Beaconsfield's menace of gout. It has disappeared—and he is very fairly well.

D. Friday, June 21.—I was engaged to-day to dine at a grand party at the English Embassy: but, about 5 o'clock, Prince Bismarck called on me and asked how we were getting on, and expressed his anxiety and threw out some plans for a compromise, such as limiting the troops of the Sultan, etc., etc.

I told him that in London we had compromised this question, and in deference to the feelings of the Emperor of Russia, and it was impossible to recede. 'Am I to understand it is an ultimatum?' 'You are.' 'I am obliged to go to the Crown Prince now. We should talk over this matter. Where do you dine to-day?' 'At the English Embassy.' 'I wish you could dine with me. I am alone at 6 o'clock.'

I accepted his invitation, sent my apology to Lady Odo, dined with Bismarck, the Princess, his daughter, his married niece, and two sons. He was very agreeable indeed at dinner, made no allusion to politics, and, tho' he ate and drank a great deal, talked more.

After dinner, we retired to another room, where he smoked and I followed his example. I believe I gave the last blow to my shattered constitution, but I felt it absolutely necessary. I had an hour and ½ of the most interesting conversation, entirely political; he was convinced that the ultimatum was not a sham, and, before I went to bed, I had the satisfaction of knowing that St. Petersburg had surrendered.

Accordingly next morning, Saturday, June 22, at half-past ten, Beaconsfield was able to telegraph to the Queen and to the Chancellor of the Exchequer: 'Russia surrenders, and accepts the English scheme for the European frontier of the Empire, and its military and political rule by the Sultan. B[ismarc]k says, "There is again a Turkey-in-Europe."' 'It is all due to your energy and firmness,' was the Queen's reply.

The Queen was right; the result *was* due to Beaconsfield's energy and firmness. 'I have to hold terribly firm language,' he told Northcote. 'I have had a hard time of it, as I am brought forward as the man of war on all occasions, and have to speak like Mars.' But he regarded his success as 'breaking the back' of the business

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of the Congress. It meant the exclusion of Russia from the Mediterranean, 'to settle herself upon whose shores was the real object of the late war. P. Gortchakoff says, "We have sacrificed 100,000 picked soldiers, and 100 millions of money for an illusion."' Bismarck said to Beaconsfield, 'You have made a present to the Sultan of the richest province in the world; 4,000 square miles of the richest soil.' 'We have gained a great victory here,' Beaconsfield told Lady Chesterfield on June 28, 'the extent of which is hardly yet understood in England.' Some, however, in England understood it. 'Joe Cowen,' wrote Barrington to Beaconsfield from the House of Commons on June 24, 'said to me just now in the lobby, "Well, when he comes back the nation ought to give him another Blenheim"! So you will see at all events that some Radicals appreciate your capacity as a statesman.'

Beaconsfield did not rely solely on the firmness of his language; on his mere declaration that he would break up the Congress rather than give way. He took the practical step of ordering a special train to be in readiness to carry the British mission back to Calais. Corry received the instructions while his chief leant, after his wont, on his arm during a morning walk *unter den Linden* on Friday the 21st, the day on the evening of which the delay granted to Russia for her answer expired; and Bismarck's hurried and unexpected call at the Kaiserhof in the afternoon was due to his knowledge of the order. Bismarck was determined to bring the Congress to a successful conclusion, and to avoid a war which could not fail to embarrass Germany. He must find out in person whether the ultimatum was final, and he persuaded Beaconsfield to throw over his engagements and dine with him quietly, in order that he might thoroughly explore his mind and intentions. Bismarck was that evening convinced himself, and he made it his business to carry conviction to the Russian Plenipotentiaries; and the victory was won.

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Corry was wont, in later life, to recount the proceedings of this fateful Friday with picturesque detail; but perhaps, for the purposes of history, it is better to rely on a contemporary letter which he wrote to a friend.

Montagu Corry to Lady Ilchester.[1]

KAISERHOF, BERLIN, *July* 2.—. . . When Lord B. told Russia that, unless Turkey had the Balkan line with all rights of defending it accorded to her, and unless this new Bulgaria shd. be so reduced that its most southern part shd. be many and many a mile from the coveted Mediterranean, we shd. leave Berlin, or in other words go home to prepare for war with Russia, men were aghast. Bismarck was as alarmed as annoyed, Russia frantic, France and Italy astonished, Andrassy delighted but incredulous! The acute crisis lasted from Lord B.'s distinct avowal of his intention at one of the private *séances* of the chief Plenipotentiaries on Tuesday the 18th till 5 p.m. on the 21st. At one moment all looked as if Russia could not give in, and I had made arrangements for a special train for England at a few hours' notice, when *the* incident of the Congress occurred, which I make no secret of though it is not known.

At 3.45[2] on the 21st Bis. called, and I showed him, dressed in general's uniform, into my chief's room—he (Bis.) charging me to know when it was 3.55, as he had an appointment at 4! And so this meeting between the two great men lasted about 7 minutes. But the business did not take long. 'Is this really the ultimatum of England,' said P. Bis. 'Yes, my Prince, it is,' replied Lord B. Just one hour after that, we learnt that the Tsar agreed to the entire English scheme. . . .

The week's struggle, ending in an excited meeting of Congress on the Saturday to register Beaconsfield's victory, brought on an attack of gout, and so prevented him from spending a second week-end at Potsdam.

To Queen Victoria.

L. June 23.—I hear nothing about the Emperor which does not reach the ears of your Majesty in the bulletins. I have tried to obtain fuller information, but have not felt justified in saying anything to your Majesty which might have distressed and perplexed your Majesty. I have heard contrary

[1] Now the Dowager Lady Ilchester.

[2] It will be noticed that Corry gives the hour of Bismarck's famous call as 3.45, whereas Beaconsfield told the Queen that it was about 5 o'clock.

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accounts to those of the bulletins, but inquiry has made me, I am glad to say, doubtful of their accuracy.

I should say Mr. Waddington looks like an *épicier*, and I think his looks do not bely his mind and general intelligence.[1]

With regard to myself, I am a little suffering from gout: it came on the night before last. I could have cured it, but there was an important and rather excited Congress yesterday, and I had to speak, and that always develops the complaint, so I remain a prisoner, which prevents my passing the day at Potsdam. It is a great loss, but the gentle Princess, who reigns in that fairy-land of Rococo, has forgiven me for my absence, and has graciously sent me fruit and flowers to tell me so.

I have just observed, that in the hurry of writing, in order to gain the messenger, I have violated all etiquette, and addressed my beloved Sovereign in the first person. My first impression was to destroy the letter, and write again by to-morrow's messenger. But a day lost is dreadful, and on the whole, I think it best to throw myself on your Majesty's ever prompt indulgence, and venture to describe myself with all duty and affection, your Majesty's devoted BEACONSFIELD.

June 24.—The Conference sate three hours to-day. Satisfactory progress. The Russian proposals as to occupation rejected, and greatly reduced.

D. In the evening Lady Odo's reception; very full and a splendid house. She is quite out and out the leader of fashion in Berlin—plays her part admirably. It is absolutely necessary to go to these receptions, but the late hours try me. I begin to die at ten o'clock and should like to be buried before midnight. But, in a Congress, absence from any influential assembly of human beings is a mistake. So much more than the world imagines is done by personal influence.

The Countess Karolyi receives on Wednesdays. She is very pretty and pleasing and I believe irreproachable for all the duties of life. Remarkably unaffected. I sate next to her at dinner, and as she had the menu in her hand, in order to say something, I asked her whether she was studying her campaign. She said quite innocently, 'Oh no—I never refuse a dish.'

I watched her and it was literally true. I watched her with amazement, that so delicate and pretty a mouth could perform such awful feats.

June 25 *and* 26.—Meetings of Congress both days, and pro-

[1] The Queen had asked for Beaconsfield's opinion of Waddington. To Baron Lionel de Rothschild Beaconsfield wrote a more favourable description —'an *épicier*, but a good man—not what the French call *méchant*. He thinks he talks English, but it is American.'

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gress well kept up. P. Gortchakoff, who is reported in the newspapers as having retired from the Congress, is seldom absent, and never ceases talking. P. Bismarck says 'Gortchakoff thinks he was made for a great parliamentary debater. It is our misfortune.' Prince Gortchakoff observed to me, on the contrary, that P. Bismarck was a very bad President, as he had no experience of Congresses, and conducts business 'as if he were in a Parliament.' P. Gortchakoff has only been two days absent: one at an early sitting, really from gout: the other, after the Balkan victory, when he did not show from chagrin.

Beaconsfield found time, now that the back of the business was broken, to send Lady Bradford a descriptive account of his experiences.

To Lady Bradford.

BERLIN, *June* 26.—. . . This is a wondrous scene; life in its highest form; and the interest wh. *la haute Assemblée* (our technical title) excites seems to increase every day.

Mine passes in attendance on the Congress; not very severe —from two till five: and in interviews with the great guns, which is far more important. Prince Gortchakoff reappeared to-day, the first time since my great victory. He is the most courteous gentleman, quite caressing, and it is quite painful to me to occasion him so much annoyance :[1] particularly as he tells me he only came to the Congress to make my acquaintance, Frances Anne of Londonderry having always mentioned me in her letters, said she thought I shd. be Minister, and, if so, hoped we shd. be friends. And, now, we meet under such terrible and trying circumstances.

Ct. Andrassy is a very picturesque gentleman. I have gained him quite, and he supports me in everything. In fact the northern Alliance is broken up.

Schou. fights a difficult and losing battle with marvellous talent and temper. He is a first-rate parliamentary debater, never takes a note, and yet in his reply never misses a point.

Bismarck soars above all: he is six foot four I shd. think, proportionately stout; with a sweet and gentle voice, and with a peculiarly refined enunciation, wh. singularly and strangely contrasts with the awful things he says: appalling from their

[1] 'He entreated me,' wrote Beaconsfield of Gortchakoff to Baron Lionel de Rothschild, 'not to change the name of South Bulgaria into Eastern Rumelia, which he said would be the greatest humiliation to Russia which could be devised. It is quite distressing to refuse anything to this dear old fox, who seems melting with the milk of human kindness.'

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frankness and their audacity. He is a complete despot here, and from the highest to the lowest of the Prussians, and all the permanent foreign diplomacy, tremble at his frown and court most sedulously his smile. He loads me with kindnesses, and, tho' often preoccupied, with an immediate dissolution of Parliament on his hands, an internecine war with the Socialists, 100's of whom he puts daily into prison in defiance of all law, he yesterday exacted from me a promise that, before I depart, I will once more dine with him quite alone. His palace has large and beautiful gardens. He has never been out since I came here, except the memorable day when he called on me to ascertain whe[the]r my policy was an ultimatum. I convinced him it was, and the Russians surrendered a few hours afterwards.

The weather here is a midsummer night's dream. Banquets and receptions every day and eve—but they don't clash with each other, as the hours are earlier, and the dinners, tho' sumptuous, are not long. People go to the theatre in the interval, or drive in the Thiergarten, wh. is a vast and most beautiful park, half forest; 1500 acres in size, wh. is exactly double of Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens together. . . .

The arrangements for the new Bulgaria and for Eastern Rumelia having been made, Beaconsfield, in his reports to the Queen, treated the discussions and conclusions of the next ten days somewhat summarily, dwelling more on the social than on the political side of his doings.

To Queen Victoria.

D. June 30.—No Congress on Thursday, as Russia requested a *relâche* in order to prepare for the difficult questions which have engaged us on Friday and yesterday. The boundaries of Servia, Montenegro, and the exchange with Rumania, not yet settled.

I went to the French reception last night (Saturday). It was male only; but I had never been, and, as I am to dine there to-day, it was necessary. I did a good deal of business, and find Count Andrassy a manageable man.

On Thursday, I called on Madame de Schleinitz, who appears to be one of the greatest ladies here. She is not very young, but still pretty, and as eloquent as Madame de Staël, tho' not at all priggish or 'superior.' She is highly cultivated and most animated, agreeable and amusing. In her chief tastes and thoughts, she told me, without reserve, that she was an enthusiastic Wagnerite, and a Pessimist!

L. July 1.—Congress sat 3 hours to-day. Rumanian deputies

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were heard. Russia made them an offer which it is supposed they will accept. The boundaries of Montenegro were then settled, chiefly according to the wishes of Austria. The Danube and indemnity will be taken to-morrow, Greece on Wednesday, and it is contemplated that Batoum will be taken on Thursday; which engrosses Lord B.'s mind.

D. The Turkish Plenipos. gave their banquet this day at the Turkish Embassy. There was a disposition—too frequent on other occasions and in other things—to treat the Turkish invitation somewhat contemptuously, and to expect a not very satisfactory reception. It was just the reverse. It was impossible for anything to be better served than the dinner; there were a number of attendants in superb dresses, and one or two national dishes, especially a huge *pilaff*, created much interest. The French Ambassador, Mr. Waddington, expressed his wish to be helped twice to this dish, and mentioned incidentally that he had travelled for three years both in Asiatic and European Turkey.

Tuesday, July 2, was the Austrian banquet. Ladies were invited. I sate between the Countess Karolyi and the Princess Radzivill, both very pretty and very agreeable women. It was a most graceful dinner. We dined in the conservatory, surrounded by exotic trees and the murmur of fountains, and looking into a beautiful garden. There was a reception in the evening—very successful.

July 3.—The great banker of Berlin is Mr. Bleichröder. He was originally Rothschild's agent, but the Prussian Wars offered him so great opportunities, that he now almost seems to rival his former master. He has built himself a real palace, and his magnificent banqueting hall permitted him to invite the whole of the Plenipotentiaries and the Secretaries of Embassy and the chief Ministers of the Empire. All these last were present, except P. Bismarck, who never appears, except occasionally at a Royal table. Mr. Bleichröder, however, is P. Bismarck's intimate, attends him every morning, and according to his own account, is the only individual who dares to speak the truth to His Highness. The banqueting hall, very vast and very lofty, and indeed the whole of the mansion, is built of every species of rare marble, and, where it is not marble, it is gold. There was a gallery for the musicians, who played Wagner, and Wagner only, which I was very glad of, as I have rarely had an opportunity of hearing that master. After dinner we were promenaded thro' the splendid saloons and picture galleries, and a ballroom fit for a fairy tale, and sitting alone on a sofa was a very mean-looking little woman, covered with pearls and diamonds, who was Madame Bleichröder and whom he had married very early in lif , when he was

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penniless. She was unlike her husband, and by no means equal to her wondrous fortune.

July 4.—I dined with the Minister of State, Bülow; a small party, about sixteen. An accomplished and apparently most amiable family. Bülow himself attractive from his experience, highly courteous tho' natural manners; his wife, lively and well informed, and two or three sons at table, who I really think were the best-looking, the best-dressed, and the best-mannered young gentlemen I ever met. They were all in the army, but she has 7 sons, equally engaging it is said.

What amuses me rather at Berlin, is that almost everybody, certainly all the ladies, are reading my novels, from the Empress downwards. The ladies are generally reading *Henrietta Temple*, which being a 'love story' and written forty years ago, is hardly becoming an Envoy Extraordinary. The Bülow family generally are very deep in my works, but P. Bismarck seemed very familiar with them.[1]

July 5.—I dined with [Bismarck] alone, *i.e.*, with his family, who disappear after the repast, and then we talked and smoked. If you do not smoke under such circumstances, you look like a spy, taking down his conversation in your mind. Smoking in common puts him at his ease.

He asked me to-day whether racing was still much encouraged in England. I replied never more so; that when I was young, tho' there were numerous race meetings, they were at intervals and sometimes long intervals—Epsom, Ascot, Doncaster, Goodwood—and Newmarket frequently; but now there were races throughout the year—it might be said, every day of the year—and all much attended.

'Then,' cried the Prince eagerly, 'there never will be Socialism in England. You are a happy country. You are safe, as long as the people are devoted to racing. Here a gentleman cannot ride down the street without twenty persons saying to themselves, or each other, "Why has that fellow a horse, and I have not one?" In England the more horses a nobleman has, the more popular he is. So long as the English are devoted to racing, Socialism has no chance with you.' This will give you a slight idea of the style of his conversation.

[1] One Wednesday night during the Congress Odo Russell sent Beaconsfield the following note: 'At the Austrian Embassy this evening I was told by the Ministers of Public Instruction, of the Interior, and of the Police, that your presence here has produced boundless excitement in the "reading world." The circulating libraries, unable to meet the demands of the public, have bought up all the Tauchnitz editions of your works, both here and at Leipzig, while the booksellers have been obliged to telegraph to England for more copies of all your novels. The newspapers who publish *feuilletons* are all advertising translations for the coming quarter of your earlier books, etc., etc., etc.'

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His views on all subjects are original, but there is no strain, no effort at paradox. He talks as Montaigne writes. When he heard about Cyprus,[1] he said: 'You have done a wise thing. This is progress. It will be popular; a nation likes progress.' His idea of progress was evidently seizing something. He said he looked upon our relinquishment of the Ionian Isles as the first sign of our decadence. Cyprus put us all right again.

L. The Rumanians have made a very good bargain for themselves, which was at the bottom of all their importunity. It is also an arrangement favorable to Turkey and Great Britain, for it gives them a seacoast[2] which would have been Bulgarian (Russian) but which now belongs to an Anti-Slav race.

Lord Beaconsfield can say nothing yet positive about Batoum, tho' its fate will probably be decided to-morrow. He thinks it, however, not impossible, that he shall succeed in getting it made a free port. This would do very well, if this be effected to-morrow. No time will then be lost in announcing the treaty with Turkey, and the occupation by your Majesty's forces of Cyprus.

This is going by an unexpected morning messenger, which is the reason that these lines are brief and hurried. He thinks there is a chance of his getting back before the 17th. If only a day, he will hasten instantly to Windsor: but he must bring the treaty, signed and sealed, with him, and that may take time.

It is evident, not only from this narrative, but from Beaconsfield's whole attitude in the negotiations both before and during the Congress, that he concentrated his personal attention on what he considered the two vital issues: first and foremost, that of Bulgaria, and, secondarily, that of Batoum and Armenia; and that he treated all the other points as of minor importance. It is also clear that, while he kept the general direction in his own hands, he left the spadework of the Congress, even in regard to the major issues, almost entirely to Salisbury, whose 'consummate mastery' of detail he greatly admired, and whose assistance at Berlin he always treated as invaluable. The British Plenipotentiaries had no

[1] Beaconsfield obviously told Bismarck confidentially about the Cyprus Convention a few days in advance of its publication to the world.

[2] The Dobrudscha.

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serious difficulty in carrying through their arrangement with Austria, by which that Power was to occupy and administer Bosnia and Herzegovina in the interests of the peace of Europe—a change which could not fail to improve the condition of their inhabitants. The understanding of Reichstadt and the Treaty of Vienna made Russia's consent to this occupation inevitable, though it was obviously reluctant. The only protest came from the Ottoman delegates; but it was clear that, after the range of the Balkans had been accepted as the northern limit of Turkey in the eastern half of the peninsula, the Sultan could not hope, in the remoter western half, to exercise any effective authority north of the Balkan parallel of latitude. To persist, as Carathéodory and his colleagues did, in passionate remonstrance, was only, as Beaconsfield and Salisbury told them, to call attention to the lack of wisdom and of regard for its true interests which marked the policy of the Turkish Government.

The smaller Powers interested in the Balkans were not members of the Congress, but representives of their interests were permitted to plead their cause. The three States which had fought in Russia's interest—Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro—had been scurvily treated in the Treaty of San Stefano; and though their position was improved by the Treaty of Berlin, owing largely to the efforts of the British Plenipotentiaries, the clauses which affected them were such as to inspire a doubt of both the power and the fair dealing of their great Slav champion. Russia insisted on the retrocession of Bessarabia from Rumania; Beaconsfield pleaded eloquently against this unnatural dismemberment, but he had recognised in the memorandum that England could not insist on the point as vital. He was instrumental, however, in securing compensation for Rumania, and additional territory for Serbia, at the expense of the bloated Bulgaria which Russia had endeavoured to create; and for Montenegro, Antivari. Beaconsfield was not altogether sorry that what he had always regarded as the ill-advised warlike adventures

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of these States should fail to realise the hopes in which they were undertaken. This appears in a letter which he wrote to the Queen for transmission to the Princess of Wales, to justify his treatment of the one small Balkan State which, on the urgent recommendation of the Powers, had desisted from its threatened invasion of Turkey.

To Queen Victoria.

OSBORNE, *July* 20, 1878.—Lord Beaconsfield is distressed to hear that Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales should be under the impression, that Her Royal Highness, or her brother His Majesty the King of Greece, were injuriously misled by your Majesty's Government in the advice, which, when solicited, they offered to Her Royal Highness and her brother during the late war between Russia and Turkey.

That advice was not to interfere in the contest; and for these reasons.

The war would terminate either by the partition of the Ottoman Empire in Europe or by a peace in which the Powers would feel it necessary to re-establish the general authority of the Sultan.

In the first instance, which Lord Beaconsfield did himself not anticipate, the claims of Greece for a share of the partitioned Empire could not be resisted: indeed they would be probably anticipated by the arrangements of the Great Powers, as no satisfactory settlement could be made without their recognition and concession. No expenditure of blood and treasure would in all probability have strengthened the position of Greece under these circumstances.

In the event of the re-establishment of the authority of the Sultan, it was Lord Beaconsfield's opinion that the compensation allotted to the rebellious tributary States for their alliance with Russia would be as meagre as practicable; and the subsequent discontent of Rumania, Servia and Montenegro proves this. As the assistance of Greece was not as necessary to Russia as that of the tributary States, it is probable that she would have shared [? fared] even worse, nor is it likely that she would have obtained more than what the Congress has recommended that the Sultan should grant to her, and which was drawn up and recommended to the Porte by your Majesty's Government before it was adopted by the Congress.

This was the general view on which the advice of Lord Beaconsfield was founded, and the soundness of which he has had no subsequent reason to doubt; but in the instance

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of Greece, there were other cogent reasons in favour of a policy of reserve.

The rebellious tributary States could only be assailed by Turkey on land, where they had many advantages; but Greece possessed a considerable and wealthy seaboard, and Turkey [had] at all times during the war a powerful and irresistible maritime force. It is true that it is probable that your Majesty's Government would not have permitted the bombardment of Athens, but they could not interfere to prevent the belligerent rights of the Porte without stipulating at the same time for the retirement of Greece from a contest which she would in all probability have found equally unequal and destructive.

The Greeks, whose cause was championed by Waddington, based their pretensions on the theory that the business which the Powers had taken in hand at Berlin was to partition the Turkish Empire among the subject nationalities. What was being decided in regard to Bulgaria, Bosnia, and Armenia, gave some colour to their theory; and, if a general liquidation of a bankrupt estate were in progress, their claims were undoubted and considerable. But it is certain that no such view of the duties of the Congress was entertained by the Powers as a whole; and Beaconsfield, in particular, regarded its especial work to be that of consolidating and restoring the authority and stability of Turkey, after such outlying portions of her territory had been lopped off as Russia's victories made no longer defensible. While, therefore, expressing warmly the traditional friendship between Great Britain and Greece, he declined to go farther than to recommend to the Porte a moderate rectification, in favour of Greece, of the Turco-Greek frontier in Thessaly and Epirus. He urged upon Turks and Greeks the advisability of a good understanding between them, in view of Pan-Slavonic ambitions.

These questions of the smaller Balkan States disposed of, the Congress came, in its later sittings, to the critical questions of Batoum and the Russo-Turkish frontier in Asia. Beaconsfield had been anxious throughout to reduce, as far as possible, Russian control over the

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Black Sea; and he was no doubt influenced, to some extent, by the outcry of his friends in England at the failure of the Government to secure Batoum and Kars for Turkey under the Anglo-Russian Memorandum. The terms of that document with reference to Asiatic Turkey were that the Tsar 'consented to restore' to Turkey the valley of Alashkerd and the town of Bayazid, 'that valley being the great transit route to Persia'; while the British Government consented 'not to contest the desire of the Emperor of Russia to occupy the port of Batoum and to guard his conquests in Armenia.' Not only were these terms of an elastic nature as to the actual lines of demarcation to be drawn between Russia and Turkey; but the 'occupation' of Batoum was obviously a vague expression, by no means necessarily implying complete incorporation in the Russian dominions or complete subordination to Russian sovereignty. Beaconsfield therefore set himself to win Russia's consent to a considerable limitation of the occupation of the port; and, further, to such a frontier line as should give Asiatic Turkey a reasonable chance of defence against future attack. In both his aims he had an appreciable success, in spite of the fact that, during his final negotiations with Gortchakoff, his health broke down, and Kidd had to be hurriedly summoned to his patient from London. In consequence Beaconsfield's diary for the Queen was wound up in a few sentences. 'On Saturday [July 6],' he told her Majesty, 'I gave my dinner to the British Embassy, ordinary and extraordinary. I gave the hotel-keeper *carte blanche*, and he deserved it. It was well done, but I felt very ill, and the effort to welcome my guests brought affairs rather to a crisis. I called on P. Gortchakoff next morning on the Batoum affair, which I was fast bringing to a satisfactory settlement, and when I returned home I had a shivering fit.' He was asked to Potsdam again on this Sunday, and again had to decline the Crown Princess's invitation and to keep his room. But his indomitable resolution rose superior

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to illness. He called once more on Gortchakoff on the Monday, and attended Congress both that day and on Tuesday, when the questions of Batoum and of the Asiatic frontier of Turkey were finally settled. Only when he had obtained the Tsar's promise that Batoum should be a free and merely commercial port, and when he had secured an unexpectedly favourable boundary line for Turkey, did he succumb and retire to bed.

A temporary misunderstanding in the negotiations between Beaconsfield and Gortchakoff about the boundary line was responsible for something of a scene at one of the last sittings of Congress. Schouvaloff was fond of telling the story, and it is quoted by M. Hanotaux in his articles. The President, threatening to leave for Kissingen if the whole business was not wound up in twenty-four hours, placed the two old statesmen side by side to explain the agreement at which they had arrived. Each solemnly produced a map with a line traced upon it, which he alleged to be the line to which the other had agreed. But the lines were different! Whereupon Gortchakoff, Schouvaloff said, turned to him in agitation and cried, 'Il y a eu trahison; ils ont eu la carte de notre état-major' —a secret map on which was drawn the line that marked the extreme limit of Russian concession. Schouvaloff used to intimate that what had really happened was that Gortchakoff, through age and incompetence, had made a muddle, and had himself handed to Beaconsfield during their conversations the confidential map. Corry, on the other hand, was in the habit of declaring that the tricky Russian Chancellor endeavoured to get the better of the British Prime Minister by sending him, after the boundary had been fixed between them, a second map with a less favourable line. As both statesmen were old, and both ill, at the time of the interviews, it is perhaps most charitable to assume a *bona fide* misunderstanding. According to Schouvaloff, the discussion in Congress became so warm between Beaconsfield and Gortchakoff that Bismarck suggested the matter should be left for

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final settlement to Salisbury and Schouvaloff, assisted by Hohenlohe. There seems to be no doubt that, if Beaconsfield did not get all he hoped for, he got decidedly more than Schouvaloff was originally disposed to concede.

To Queen Victoria.

(*Telegram*) BERLIN, *July* 6, 6.35.—Russia, at the personal instance of the Emperor, to show his anxiety to meet the wishes of England, offers to make Batoum a free port. England has reserved its opinion, otherwise the Congress might have virtually closed to-day.

(*Telegram*) *July* 9, 1.30 *p.m.*—The affair of Batoum is just arranged between myself and Prince Gortchakoff, which he particularly desired me to tell to your Majesty. Russia restores to Turkey the districts in question, which contain one hundred and fifty thousand Mussulman population. Russia retains the port, which is to be free and exclusively commercial.

Montagu Corry to Queen Victoria.

BERLIN, *July* 9, '78.—Mr. Montagu Corry with his humble duty to your Majesty. Lord Beaconsfield has, since the change, last week, to almost wintry weather, been complaining of a return of the throat affection, which has so often troubled him, and of feeling unwell generally. On no occasion, however, has he had to remain away from Congress, or to avoid a single necessary act of business. But yesterday at the close of the longest sitting of Congress which has yet taken place—lasting four hours—Mr. Corry found Lord Beaconsfield to be so suffering and prostrate that he despatched a telegram to Dr. Kidd, asking him to come to Berlin at once.

Mr. Corry has to-day received a message that Dr. Kidd is on his way and will reach Berlin to-morrow. To-day Lord Beaconsfield is undoubtedly better, in every respect, and has closed his day's work, which has included a sitting of the Congress, without a return of the severe difficulty of breathing which overpowered him yesterday. Your Majesty shall have by telegram, after Dr. Kidd's arrival, a report of Lord Beaconsfield's condition.

July 11 (*Thursday*).—. . . Mr. Corry is happy to say that Dr. Kidd finds no evil existing which may not be removed entirely before the journey home. He will remain and accompany Lord Beaconsfield. . . .

Friday, July 12.—. . . This morning the gout is more developed, and Dr. Kidd wishes Lord Beaconsfield to remain, for the day, in a recumbent position, and to be as quiet as

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possible, so that Lord Beaconsfield once again has to forgo the honour of writing to your Majesty with his own hand. At the same time Dr. Kidd finds very considerable improvement in all the symptoms, especially in the chest affection, and entertains no doubt whatever that Lord Beaconsfield will be well able to leave on Sunday morning and confidently hopes that he will reach London—on Tuesday—in better condition than for some months past.

Lord Beaconsfield desires Mr. Corry to let your Majesty know that Prince Bismarck called upon him at about 10 o'clock last evening and remained with him an hour talking over Hanoverian affairs. Lord Beaconsfield believes that the Prince is personally anxious for a settlement—but he detailed reasons which showed that, in His Highness's opinion, a *mezzo termine* was impossible. Prince Bismarck said Lord Beaconsfield might maintain a confidential correspondence with him on the subject whenever he liked.

Beaconsfield's efforts to secure more favourable terms for the Hanoverian Royal Family, in whom Queen Victoria, as their near relative, was much interested, were constantly met by Bismarck with the reply that restitution depended on absolute abdication—a condition with which the new King would not comply. Two letters that passed between the Chancellor and the Prime Minister in the following year, in pursuance of the arrangement for confidential correspondence, may be given here.

From Prince Bismarck.

BERLIN, *April* 16, 1879.

MY DEAR LORD,—I received your letter of the 6th inst., and feel very grateful to you for having diverted the subject to which it refers from the intended channel to that of a confidential correspondence between us.

Considering the painful position of Her Majesty Queen Mary and her daughters I think it proper that an adequate provision should be found for them, though I have distinctly to deny any kind of obligation on the part of the Prussian Government. The will of His late Majesty King George, of which you have been kind enough to send me an extract, rests on an erroneous supposition; from the memoir I beg to enclose you will see that there is under our administration no fund to pay the legacies. Nor is the settlement made in November, 1842, in favour of Queen Mary and her future progeny binding [on] the Prussian Government.

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But, as the private property of the late King, existing in England and elsewhere, has gone to His Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland exclusively, I am prepared to propose to the Prussian Ministers, and, after having obtained their consent, to His Majesty, that sums amounting approximately to those of the above-mentioned settlement should be paid to Queen Mary and her daughters during their respective lifetime. If in consequence of the attitude assumed by His Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland in issuing his manifesto of June last the sequestrated property should return to the Prussian exchequer, I am, further, disposed, in a sense of equity, to exert myself for the purpose of securing the continuance of the said annuities and not allowing the three Royal ladies to become victims of an act they were unable to prevent.

While you kindly remember my house, I think with sympathy of the policy you are pursuing towards those unruly wasps that annoy the British lion in some of his dominions. My wife and my daughter, thanking you for your kind words, tell me to say that they will, like myself, be very happy to meet your lordship once more round a mahogany of moderate size. Believe me, my dear Lord, in true attachment, your faithful servant, V. BISMARCK.

To Prince Bismarck.

10, DOWNING STREET, *July* 13, 1879.

MY DEAR PRINCE,—I should have thanked you for your letter of true friendship long before this, but I postponed doing so while the affairs of the unhappy family seemed unsettled, as the members of it in this country were a little more restless than those on the Continent. I assume now, however, that everything is concluded: at any rate, my interference is formally terminated.

I will, therefore, only thank you for the cordiality with which you responded to my appeal, and I was gratified to feel, that I had not counted on your friendship in vain.

You seem to have got over your principal difficulties with your accustomed energy and resource; I have, also, little to complain of. The Afghan campaign realised all that I had contemplated, and I expect good and conclusive news from Africa, very shortly.

Your honor, and mine own, were concerned in carrying out the Treaty of Berlin, for it is not for a man like you to preside over a Congress, and see its provisions evaded. I wish we were smoking a pipe together, and could talk over the Greek affairs. The Janina question is not one of Turkish *amour propre*, at which we should all laugh. It involves

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an Albanian war, which would probably be long and devastating, and precipitate results which it is the interest of Germany and England to postpone.

The conduct of the Greek Govt., assuming certain conclusions in the Treaty of Berlin, which can't be found there, and, simultaneously, declaring that they will not negotiate except upon this imaginary basis, really arrests diplomacy.

A larger share of Thessaly to Greece would be a prudent and satisfactory settlement. Think of this, my dear Prince!

I can't make out about our good friend Schouvaloff, who is most popular with all of us. Will he return here? I hope so, for the sake of his society, tho', for public reasons, many would be glad to see him in the first place.

Remember me, I pray, to the dear kind Princess, and to your charming daughter, who, I hope and feel sure, is as happy as she deserves.

I hope also that you yourself are well. The successful should really enjoy good health, for chagrin is the origin of most disorders. Though I fear there is little chance of our meeting again, we must cherish good relations. That is not difficult for me, since I remember our intimacy always with pleasure, and entertain for you a sincere affection.—BEACONSFIELD.

Beaconsfield's diary and letters have shown how marked was the attention Bismarck paid him; how he constantly treated him as the pivot on whom the Congress turned. There can be no doubt of the strong impression that the Prime Minister made on the Chancellor. Besides the well-known sentence about the 'old Jew,' there is a conversation reported by Poschinger in which Bismarck described Beaconsfield as 'a capable statesman, far above Gortchakoff and many others.' He recognised in him not merely a finesse which he could well appreciate, but also a directness, when business was in question, which matched his own. 'It was easy to transact business with him; in a quarter of an hour you knew exactly how you stood with him; the limits to which he was prepared to go were clearly defined, and a rapid summary soon precised matters.'[1] To the Crown Princess Bismarck said that Beaconsfield fulfilled all his ideas of a great

[1] Poschinger's *Conversations with Prince Bismarck.*

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statesman, besides being personally agreeable and charming. Those who penetrated to Bismarck's private cabinet in Berlin, in the times immediately following the Congress, found that Beaconsfield's was one of three portraits there displayed; 'my Sovereign, my wife, and my friend,' the Chancellor explained. 'How I should have liked to have seen you and him [Bismarck] together!' wrote the Prince of Wales to Beaconsfield.

Beaconsfield, for his part, found that his experience in the Congress and his frequent talks with its President confirmed him in the view which the course of events, in spite of his original reluctance, had forced upon him—that a good understanding with Bismarck and Germany was for the time the best foundation of British foreign policy. But he was well aware of the dangers of Bismarck's statecraft, which carried out in action the old maxim, 'Divide et impera.' He knew that throughout the European negotiations of the last two years, the German Chancellor had played off England against Russia, and Russia against England, though he finally came out on England's side. Accordingly Beaconsfield declined entirely to entertain the insidious suggestion that England should take Egypt—a suggestion made with the view of permanently dividing England and France. He had been compelled to abandon for the present the idea of an Anglo-French alliance; but he was determined not to wound French feelings by aggressive action in regions where French interest was strong. On the suggestion that France should have free scope in Tunis he seems to have hesitated. He was shrewd enough to realise that the main object was to alienate Italy from France. But he was ready to gratify the French desire for expansion, and he agreed with Bismarck that it would be well if it should be gratified outside Europe. Accordingly Salisbury intimated to Waddington that no objection to a forward policy in Tunis would come from England.

Beaconsfield concentrated the attention of the Plenipotentiaries on himself at the close, as he had at the begin-

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ning, of the Congress. As soon as the question of Batoum was settled the Cyprus Convention was given to the world; and was recognised everywhere as a daring stroke with the obvious mark of Disraelian inspiration. Though there was some grumbling in France and a little in Italy, the general feeling in Europe was one of admiration of an instrument so well calculated to restore British prestige in the East. 'The traditions of England are not quite lost,' wrote the *Journal des Débats*; 'they still survive in the hearts of a woman and of an aged statesman.' Nowhere was there more applause and appreciation than among the diplomatists assembled at Berlin. If there was any annoyance felt in Russia, there was no suspension or even weakening of the good relations in Congress between Beaconsfield and Gortchakoff, Salisbury and Schouvaloff. At home the terms of the Convention reassured those of Beaconsfield's friends who had been dismayed at the concessions made to Russia in the memorandum; and, though many Liberals protested against the acquisition of fresh territory and fresh responsibilities, they recognised that public opinion was here decidedly against them. Barrington wrote on July 11, 'Charles Villiers tells me his friends have been raving a good deal to him about the awful crime you have committed, that it is unconstitutional, etc., etc.; but that his reply was that, although it might all be true, he thought his friends had better not drive the Government to a dissolution, as the Liberals would fare but badly in the country!'

With the blushing honours of the Cyprus Convention thick upon him, Beaconsfield rose from his sick-bed to sign the treaty which he had taken so considerable a part in arranging, and was even able to write to his Sovereign with his own hand an account of the historic day.

To Queen Victoria.

BERLIN, *July* 13, '78.—Lord Beaconsfield with his humble duty to your Majesty. Treaty signed to-day at four o'clock,

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at the Radzivill Palace. It was a full-dress meeting. Lord Beaconsfield was present, his first appearance for some days. All the Secretaries of Legation were permitted to witness the act.

He leaves Berlin to-morrow morning at 9 o'clock, and intends to sleep at Cologne, and at Calais next night, and hopes to reach London on Tuesday. Wednesday will be a day of rest, and it is his present purpose to address the House of Lords on Thursday. Papers will be presented, and the Opposition will of course ask for some time—ten days or so—to digest them. During this interval Lord Beaconsfield will ask permission to wait upon your Majesty at Osborne.

After the treaty was signed, Lord Beaconsfield had an audience of the Empress, an interesting one—not a mere formal one—and after that he paid a farewell visit to the Crown Princess, whose kindness to him while at Berlin has been extreme. All this has exhausted the little strength he has, and therefore he has asked permission not to attend the great banquet to-night in the White Hall. He regrets it, as it will be an historic occasion: but he consoles himself by the recollection, that he has assisted in bringing about a settlement which will probably secure the peace of Europe for a long time, and will certainly not disgrace your Majesty's throne.

How shall he thank sufficiently your Majesty for your Majesty's gracious letter of this morning and its enclosures, and many other passages of condescending sympathy and kindness! He cannot very well guide his pen, but yet will try to say how deeply and finely he feels the privilege of being the trusted servant of a Sovereign whom he adores!

King Leopold to Queen Victoria.

(*Translation*) *July* 14, '78.—. . . Allow me to offer you my most sincere and my warmest congratulations on the occasion of the great triumph of English policy.

The line of the Balkans assured to Turkey, the treaty guaranteeing her Asiatic possessions, and the occupation of the Island of Cyprus, are great events, which have made a great impression on the world and greatly rejoiced the friends of England. Bright pages have been added to the history of a splendid reign. Honour to Lord Beaconsfield, honour to you, dear Cousin, who have sustained and encouraged him and have given him the necessary support to render immense services to your Empire. . . .

The Crown Princess to Queen Victoria.

NEUES PALAIS, POTSDAM, *July* 16, '78.—I am all impatience to hear from you after the event of the Turko-English Con-

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vention and the occupation of Cyprus. I think it such a great event, and, as I already wrote, one which must give such pleasure to all friends of England! Lord Beaconsfield has indeed won laurels, made himself a name, and before all restored to his country the prestige of honour and dignity it had lost on the Continent, thanks to Lord Derby and Mr. Gladstone; and you must feel intense gratification after all the anxiety and worry you went through!

I was very sorry to take leave of Lord Beaconsfield, who certainly has a great charm when one sees more of him, and of Lord Salisbury, who is such a truly amiable man! The others, alas, I saw little or nothing of!

Schouvaloff is much pleased at the result of the Congress. Prince Gortchakoff went away deeply disappointed and dejected. . . .

King Leopold wished to do Beaconsfield honour on his return to England, as on his outward journey; but the gout-ridden statesman had to husband his resources to meet the calls that must be made upon them at home. He had not strength even to pay his devoirs to his own Sovereign before making his public explanation in the House of Lords. He arrived in England with the treaty on Tuesday, July 16, and was welcomed with enthusiasm both in Dover and in London. The reception was popular rather than official.[1] Though the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs were present at Charing Cross, together with such few of Beaconsfield's colleagues as could be spared from their Parliamentary duties, the most notable persons to meet him were two eminent philanthropists, Lady Burdett-Coutts, an old friend, and Sir Moses Montefiore, the most respected member in England of that great race from which Beaconsfield sprang. When he reached his official residence he reported to the Queen that there had been a marvellous exhibition of public feeling from Charing Cross to Downing Street, and that the street was filled with a dense crowd, singing loyal songs. There was one marked feature in his home-coming. Whereas he had travelled out by himself, he

[1] So far as there was any organisation Lord Henry Lennox was responsible for it. He thus resumed his attitude of devotion to his old chief. See Vol. V., pp. 291 and 483.

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returned with Salisbury by his side, and they drove together amid the cheering throng from the station; Beaconsfield insisting that his colleague—to whom, he said in one of his speeches, 'fell the labouring oar'—should be associated with himself in all public tributes of regard, and earnestly requesting the Queen to bestow like honours on them both. Both statesmen appeared at windows in Downing Street, when Beaconsfield proudly claimed that they had brought back from Berlin 'Peace with Honour.'

The Queen's welcome to her favourite Minister on his triumphant return was almost of a rapturous character. She gave him—and Salisbury on his recommendation—the Garter which he had refused in January; and would gladly have raised him to a marquisate or dukedom, and settled a peerage on his brother or nephew, could she have prevailed on him to consent. Beaconsfield did not forget his other colleague at Berlin, but recommended Odo Russell for a peerage; which he at first accepted, with his brother the Duke of Bedford's consent, but afterwards refused, because the Duke, on reconsideration, doubted the propriety of a Whig Ambassador, and a Russell, accepting honours from a Tory Prime Minister.

From Queen Victoria.

WINDSOR, *July* 16, '78.—The Queen thanks Lord Beaconsfield very much for his very kind letter of the 13th, and sends these lines with some Windsor flowers to welcome him back in triumph! He has gained a wreath of laurels which she would willingly herself offer him, but hopes that the Blue Ribbon she may greet him with [*sic*] at Osborne. He must take 2 days there and of course bring Mr. Corry. The Queen is so grieved at his provoking indisposition. . . .

She will write again to-night.

What distinction should be given Lord Salisbury?

(*Later*) The Queen is much grieved to hear from Lord Beaconsfield that he has been so suffering from his old enemy, but she trusts that by this time he is already much better. The exertions he has made have been so great that the Queen has always been living in fear of some such attack. But he has achieved so much that that will help to make him well.

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THE 'PAS DE DEUX.'

FROM THE 'SCENE DE TRIOMPHE' IN THE GRAND ANGLO-TURKISH BALLET D'ACTION.

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He *must now* accept the Garter. She must insist on it.

It will be a disappointment not to see Lord Beaconsfield so soon, but he must be very careful and husband his strength for Parliament. The Convention and possession of Cyprus has given immense satisfaction to the country. High and low are delighted, excepting Mr. Gladstone, who is frantic. . . .

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING STREET., *July* 16, '78.

MADAM, AND MOST BELOVED SOVEREIGN,—I am scarcely capable of addressing your Majesty, and could indeed address no one else, but I could not let so gracious a letter remain for an hour unnoticed.

I envy Lord Salisbury seeing your Majesty first, yet, in spite of that, I will even on my knees entreat your Majesty to deign to bestow on him, also, the great distinction which your Majesty has proposed to confer on me. He has been a faithful and a most able colleague, and his great talents, his historic name, and this signal public service indicate a worthy recipient of your Majesty's favor.

I hope to speak in the House of Lords on Thursday, and in that case, I should propose on Saturday, if this be not too early, which perhaps it may be, to wait on your Majesty, to tell your Majesty many things, but certainly to assure your Majesty, that of all your Majesty's faithful subjects, there is none that can exceed in duty and affection, Your devoted BEACONSFIELD.

From Queen Victoria.

FROGMORE, *July* 17, '78.—The Queen was much touched by Lord Beaconsfield's very kind letter. Would he not accept a Marquisate or Dukedom *in addition* to the Blue Ribbon? And will he not allow the Queen to settle a Barony or Viscounty on his Brother and Nephew? Such a name should be perpetuated!

The Queen would be delighted to see Lord Beaconsfield on Saturday but really thinks he ought to delay it until Tuesday or Wednesday next week, and she hopes to see him again before leaving for Scotland, which she does not think of doing before the 23rd of August. . . .

The Queen will have much pleasure in giving the Blue Ribbon to Lord Salisbury.

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING ST., *July* 18, '78.—Lord Beaconsfield with his humble duty to your Majesty. He was too unwell to be able

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to acknowledge your Majesty's most gracious letter yesterday, but he is glad to say he is quite himself again, and shall be able to make his statement in the House of Lords this afternoon at five o'clock. He could not endure postponing his visit to your Majesty any later than Saturday. It is so very long since he has had the happiness of seeing your Majesty, and so much has happened in the interval.

He will not trust himself now in endeavoring to express what he feels to your Majesty's kindness. He thinks he is ennobled thro' your Majesty's goodness quite enough, tho' with infinite deference to your Majesty's gracious pleasure, he would presume to receive the Garter; but, as he always feels, your Majesty's kind thoughts are dearer to him than any personal distinction, however rich and rare. The belief that your Majesty trusts, and approves of, him is 'more precious than rubies.'

From Queen Victoria.

WINDSOR, *July* 18, '78.—The Queen thanks Lord Beaconsfield for his most kind letter. She asks and counts on his making no exertion when at Osborne, and doing what is good for him and what he likes.

She hopes he will certainly stay 2 and she hopes 3 days at Osborne.[1] This heat tries the Queen. . . .

The Queen and Beatrice wish we could hear you speak to-night.

There was joy and relief in the country that European peace had been secured, to all appearance, for many years; and there was general satisfaction both with the terms of the Treaty and with the distinguished part that British representatives had played in Berlin. But two extreme parties, at opposite poles, were critical. The special friends of Turkey, who were, in the main, high Tories, complained that, instead of preserving Turkey's independence and integrity, Beaconsfield and Salisbury had ruthlessly partitioned her territory amongst her foes and her false friends. A Macaronic poem of the day sadly asked:

[1] Beaconsfield wrote to Lady Bradford from Osborne on Monday, July 22: 'At three o'clock I am to be invested with the Garter: a sort of ceremony I fear.'

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Ubi sunt provinciæ
Quas est laus pacâsse ?
Totæ, totæ, sunt partitæ;
Has tulerunt Muscovitæ,
Illas Count Andrassy.

On the other hand, the friends of Russia and advocates of the claims of oppressed nationalities, who were mostly Radicals or high Anglicans, complained that the partition of Turkey had not been more thorough; and were indignant at the comparatively moderate satisfaction which Bulgaria, Rumania, Serbia, Bosnia, Montenegro, and, above all, Greece received under the provisions of the Treaty. Headed by Gladstone, they deplored that British Plenipotentiaries should have spoken and acted at Berlin rather like Metternich than like Canning—both of them, by the way, statesmen whom Beaconsfield's catholic taste enabled him to admire.

Both sets of critics were met and dealt with by Beaconsfield in his speech in the House of Lords on laying the protocols of the Treaty on the table. His main contention was, he said, that by the Congress of Berlin and the Cyprus Convention the menace to European independence contained in the Treaty of San Stefano had been removed, and the threatened injury to the British Empire averted. That preliminary Treaty had reduced the Sultan to a state of subjection to Russia. Now the Congress had restored to him two-thirds of the territory that was to have formed the great Bulgarian State, and had given him in the Balkans a defensible frontier, which he had power to guard with all his available force. Beaconsfield explained that he had effected a change in the name of the new province south of the Balkans, from South Bulgaria to Eastern Rumelia, so as to prevent constant intriguing to bring about a union of the two provinces; and he went into some detail in regard to the improvements proposed in Turkish administration there.

He justified the policy of entrusting Austria with the administration of Bosnia by pointing out that this distant

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province was in a state of chronic anarchy; that Turkey could only restore order by an army of 50,000 men; that it was probable that such an effort would absolutely ruin the Porte, at a time when the statesmen of Europe were attempting to concentrate and condense Turkish resources with a view to strengthening them. Austria was the neighbour clearly fitted by position to undertake the duty of restoring order and tranquillity. Thereupon the cry of 'partition of Turkey' had been raised. On the contrary the object of the Government was restoration, not partition. There was a school of statesmen who advocated partition, but the Government had resisted them because, 'exclusive of high moral considerations, they believed an attempt, on a great scale, to accomplish the partition of Turkey would inevitably lead to a long, sanguinary, and often-recurring struggle, and that Europe and Asia would both be involved in a series of troubles and sources of disaster and danger of which no adequate idea could be formed.' It was remarkable that the whole Powers of Europe, including Russia, had come to the unanimous conclusion that the best chance for the tranquillity and order of the world was 'to retain the Sultan as part of the acknowledged political system of Europe.' Once more Beaconsfield explained in detail how the mere loss of provinces did not imply partition.

After a great war like this, it is utterly impossible that you can have a settlement of any permanent character without a redistribution of territory and considerable changes. But that is not partition. My lords, a country may have lost provinces, but that is not partition. We know that not very long ago a great country—one of the foremost countries in the world—lost provinces; yet is not France one of the great Powers of the world, and with a future—a commanding future? Austria herself has lost provinces—more provinces even than Turkey, perhaps; even England has lost provinces—the most precious possessions—the loss of which every Englishman must deplore to this moment.[1] We lost them from bad government. Had the principles which now obtain between the metropolis

[1] Quoting this passage, M. Hanotaux interposes a query; 'S'agit-il de Calais?' But of course Beaconsfield was referring to the American Colonies.

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and her dependencies prevailed then, we should not perhaps have lost those provinces, and the power of this Empire would have been proportionally increased. It is perfectly true that the Sultan of Turkey has lost provinces; it is true that his armies have been defeated; it is true that his enemy is even now at his gates; but all that has happened to other Powers. But a Sovereign who has not yet forfeited his capital, whose capital has not yet been occupied by his enemy and that capital one of the strongest in the world—who has armies and fleets at his disposal, and who still rules over 20,000,000 of inhabitants, cannot be described as a Power whose dominions have been partitioned.

Connected with this question of partition was that of the claims of Greece. It was on the desire of the British Government that Greek representatives were heard at the Congress; but their demands were extravagant, not stopping short of Constantinople, though, indeed, 'they were willing to accept as an instalment the two large provinces of Epirus and Thessaly, and the island of Crete. It was quite evident at the Congress that the representatives of Greece entirely misunderstood the objects of our labours; that we were not there to partition Turkey and give them their share of Turkey, but for a very contrary purpose; as far as we could, to re-establish the dominion of the Sultan on a rational basis, to condense and concentrate his authority, and to take the opportunity—of which we have largely availed ourselves—of improving the condition of his subjects.' In spite of this misunderstanding the Government had done what they could for Greece. They had urged Turkey and Greece to come together to defend their common interests against the overpowering Slav current in the Balkans; and they had recommended Turkey to grant a rectification of frontier, which would add considerably to Greek strength and resources. 'Greece is a country so interesting,' added Beaconsfield, 'that it enlists the sympathies of all educated men. Greece has a future; and I would say, if I might be permitted, to Greece, what I would say to an individual who has a future, "Learn to be patient."' It was good, but unpalatable, advice.

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Summing up the first portion of his speech, Beaconsfield pointed with some pride to the fact that—omitting, of course, Serbia and Rumania, now independent; omitting Bulgaria, still a tributary principality; and Bosnia, in Austrian occupation—European Turkey still retained a dominion of 60,000 square miles, with a population of 6,000,000, 'and that population in a very great degree concentrated and condensed in the provinces contiguous to the capital.' Moreover, Great Britain had secured this satisfactory result without war, and without more than comparatively trifling expenditure.

You cannot look at the map of [European] Turkey as it had been left by the Treaty of San Stefano, and as it has been rearranged by the Treaty of Berlin, without seeing that great results have accrued. If these results had been the consequences of a long war, if they had been the results of a struggle like that we underwent in the Crimea, I do not think they would have been even then unsubstantial or unsatisfactory. My lords, I hope that you and the country will not forget that these results have been obtained without shedding the blood of a single Englishman; and if there has been some expenditure, it has been an expenditure which, at least, has shown the resources and determination of this country. Had you entered into that war, for which you were prepared, and well prepared, probably in a month you would have exceeded the whole expenditure you have now incurred.

Turning to Asia, Beaconsfield recognised that one of his most difficult tasks would be to justify the assignment to Russia of Kars and Batoum. His defence was, if not absolutely convincing, at least difficult to answer. Russia had fairly won this territory in war, by no means for the first time, and the Turks had accepted her title in the Treaty of San Stefano. Kars had been conquered by Russia three times, and three times she had been forced to relinquish it, mainly owing to English efforts. Were we to make it a *casus belli?* And Batoum? Was it a Portsmouth, or was it not rather a Cowes? (This suggestion, considering the importance which Beaconsfield had always attached to Batoum, did not lack boldness.) It could only be made a first-class port by great and

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expensive engineering works. Should we be justified in going to war with Russia for Batoum ? Especially as we had secured for Turkey the caravan route to Persia through Bayazid and the Alashkerd Valley, and so, though Beaconsfield tactfully omitted to say this, cut off Russia from pushing her advantage to the south. It seemed to the Government that the time had come for an arrangement which should put an end to these perpetually recurring wars between Russia and the Porte; and which should secure tranquillity and order in Asiatic Turkey, and so terminate British anxieties about India. This was the object of the Cyprus Convention. Beaconsfield explained how careful they had been to show consideration for France—'a nation to whom we are bound by almost every tie that can unite a people, and with whom our intimacy is daily increasing.'

We avoided Egypt, knowing how susceptible France is with regard to Egypt; we avoided Syria, knowing how susceptible France is on the subject of Syria; and we avoided availing ourselves of any part of the *terra firma*, because we would not hurt the feelings or excite the suspicions of France. France knows that for the last two or three years we have listened to no appeal which involved anything like an acquisition of territory, because the territory which might have come to us would have been territory which France would see in our hand with suspicion and dislike.

But I must make this observation to your lordships. We have a substantial interest in the East; it is a commanding interest, and its behest must be obeyed. But the interest of France in Egypt, and her interest in Syria, are, as she acknowledges, sentimental and traditionary interests; and, although I respect them, and although I wish to see in the Lebanon and Egypt the influence of France fairly and justly maintained, and although her officers and ours in that part of the world—and especially in Egypt—are acting together with confidence and trust, we must remember that our connection with the East is not merely an affair of sentiment and tradition, but that we have urgent and substantial and enormous interests which we must guard and keep. Therefore, when we find that the progress of Russia is a progress which, whatever may be the intentions of Russia, necessarily in that part of the world produces such a state of disorganisation and want of

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confidence in the Porte, it comes to this—that, if we do not interfere in vindication of our own interests, that part of Asia must become the victim of anarchy, and ultimately become part of the possessions of Russia.

Russia, Beaconsfield admitted, could not be blamed for availing herself of the anarchy in Asiatic Turkey. 'But, yielding to Russia what she has obtained, we say to her, "Thus far, and no farther." Asia is large enough for both of us. There is no reason for these constant wars, or fears of wars, between Russia and England.' He had said before, and repeated now, that there was room enough in Asia for both Russia and England. But the room that we required we must secure. 'In taking Cyprus the movement is not Mediterranean, it is Indian.' It was for the preservation of the Empire in peace, and secondarily for the development of civilisation in Asia, that the Cyprus Convention was signed. It was on this note that he ended.

We have no reason to fear war. Her Majesty has fleets and armies which are second to none. England must have seen with pride the Mediterranean covered with her ships; she must have seen with pride the discipline and devotion which have been shown to her and her Government by all her troops, drawn from every part of her Empire. I leave it to the illustrious duke [Cambridge], in whose presence I speak, to bear witness to the spirit of imperial patriotism which has been exhibited by the troops from India, which he recently reviewed at Malta. But it is not on our fleets and armies, however necessary they may be for the maintenance of our material strength, that I alone or mainly depend in that enterprise on which this country is about to enter. It is on what I most highly value—the consciousness that in the Eastern nations there is confidence in this country, and that, while they know we can enforce our policy, at the same time they know that our Empire is an Empire of liberty, of truth, and of justice.

In this speech Beaconsfield touched but lightly upon the increase of British responsibilities incurred under the Cyprus Convention; but his few words were pointed. 'A prudent Minister certainly would not recklessly

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enter into any responsibility; but a Minister who is afraid to enter into any responsibility is, to my mind, not a prudent Minister. We do not wish to enter into any unnecessary responsibility, but there is a responsibility from which we certainly shrink; we shrink from the responsibility of handing to our successors a weakened or a diminished Empire.' A much fuller defence on this point was extracted from Beaconsfield by on attack which Gladstone made upon him in a public speech at Southwark. Gladstone complained that British engagements had been enormously extended, and British taxation vastly increased, without British assent, even without British knowledge. No despotic power would have dared to do what Beaconsfield had done. No statesman he had known would have put his name to such an arrangement as the Convention. It was an 'insane covenant,' and its secret negotiation an 'act of duplicity.' Beaconsfield took advantage of a banquet given him at Knightsbridge on July 27 to reply to this vehement onslaught.

It is said that we have increased, and dangerously increased, our responsibilities as a nation by that convention. In the first place, I deny that we have increased our responsibilities by that convention. I maintain that by that convention we have lessened our responsibilities. Suppose now, for example, the settlement of Europe had not included the convention of Constantinople and the occupation of the isle of Cyprus; suppose it had been limited to the mere Treaty of Berlin, what under all probable circumstances might then have occurred? In ten, fifteen, it might be in twenty years, the power and resources of Russia having revived, some quarrel would again have occurred, Bulgarian or otherwise, and in all probability the armies of Russia would have been assailing the Ottoman dominions both in Europe and Asia, and enveloping and enclosing the city of Constantinople and its all-powerful position.

Well, what would be the probable conduct, under these circumstances, of the Government of this country, whoever the Ministers might be, whatever party might be in power? I fear there might be hesitation for a time, a want of decision, a want of firmness; but no one doubts that ultimately England would have said, 'This will never do; we must prevent the conquest of Asia Minor; we must interfere in this matter and

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arrest the course of Russia.' . . . Well, that being the case, I say it is extremely important that this country should take a step beforehand which should indicate what the policy of England would be; that you should not have your Ministers meeting in a council chamber, hesitating and doubting, and considering contingencies, and then acting at last, but acting perhaps too late. I say, therefore, that the responsibilities of this country have not been increased; the responsibilities already existed. Though I, for one, would never shrink from increasing the responsibilities of this country if they are responsibilities which ought to be undertaken, the responsibilities of this country are practically diminished by the course we have taken.

My lords and gentlemen, one of the results of my attending the Congress of Berlin has been to prove, what I always suspected to be an absolute fact, that neither the Crimean War, nor this horrible devastating war which has just terminated, would have taken place if England had spoken with the necessary firmness. Russia has complaints to make against this country that neither in the case of the Crimean War nor on this occasion—and I don't shrink from my share of the responsibility in this matter—was the voice of England so clear and decided as to exercise a due share in the guidance of European opinion. Well, gentlemen, suppose my noble friend and myself had come back with the Treaty of Berlin, and had not taken the step which is to be questioned within the next eight and forty hours, could we with any self-respect have met our countrymen when they asked, What securities have you made for the peace of Europe? How far have you diminished the chance of perpetually recurring war on this question of the East by the Treaty of Berlin? Why, they could say, all we have gained by the Treaty of Berlin is probably the peace of a few years, and at the end of that time the same phenomenon will arise, and the Ministers of England must patch up the affair as well as they can.

Beaconsfield then fastened on Gladstone's phrase 'an insane covenant.' He would not pretend to be as competent a judge of insanity as his opponent.

But I would put this issue to an English jury. Which do you believe most likely to enter an insane convention, a body of English gentlemen honoured by the favour of their Sovereign and the confidence of their fellow-subjects, managing your affairs for five years, I hope with prudence, and not altogether without success, or a sophistical rhetorician, inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity, and gifted with an

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egotistical imagination that can at all times command an interminable and inconsistent series of arguments to malign an opponent and to glorify himself ?

Gladstone's unmeasured language, the climax of a violent campaign carried on for two years against the foreign policy of his country, justified a crushing rejoinder; but there was not much evidence of happy inspiration or of statesmanlike dignity in the phrases which Beaconsfield actually used. Gladstone, however, was perhaps not well advised when he wrote to ask Beaconsfield for particulars of any personal attacks made in the course of a campaign which derived much of its piquancy from the personal *animus* which was clearly interwoven with its political idealism. Beaconsfield's reply pointed this out.

To W. E. Gladstone.

10, DOWNING STREET, *July* 30, 1878.—Lord Beaconsfield presents his compliments to Mr. Gladstone, and has the honor to acknowledge the receipt of his letter of this day's date, referring to some remarks made by Lord Beaconsfield last night in the House of Lords, and requesting to be supplied with a list of epithets applied, not merely to Lord Beaconsfield's measures, but to his person and character, and with a note of the times and places at which they were used.

As this would involve a research over a period of two years and a half, during which Mr. Gladstone, to use his own expressions at Oxford, has been counterworking 'by day and by night, week by week, and month by month,' the purpose of Lord Beaconsfield, Lord Beaconsfield, who is at this moment much pressed with affairs, is obliged to request those gentlemen, who are kind enough to assist him in the conduct of public business, to undertake the necessary researches, which probably may require some little time; but that Lord Beaconsfield, by such delay in replying to Mr. Gladstone, may not appear wanting in becoming courtesy, he must observe with reference to the Oxford speech referred to in the House of Lords, and which was one long invective against the Government, that Mr. Gladstone then remarked that, when he spoke of the Government, he meant Lord Beaconsfield, who was alone responsible, and by whom 'the great name of England had been degraded and debased.'

In the same spirit a few days back at Southwark, Lord

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Beaconsfield was charged with 'an act of duplicity of which every Englishman should be ashamed, an act of duplicity which has not been surpassed, and,' Mr. Gladstone believed, 'has been rarely equalled in the history of nations.' Such an act, however, might be expected from a Minister who, according to Mr. Gladstone, had 'sold the Greeks.'

With regard to the epithet 'devilish' which Lord Beaconsfield used in the House of Lords, he is informed that it was not Mr. Gladstone at Hawarden who compared Lord Beaconsfield to Mephistopheles, but only one of Mr. Gladstone's friends, kindly enquiring of Mr. Gladstone how they were 'to get rid of this Mephistopheles': but as Mr. Gladstone proceeded to explain the mode, probably the Birmingham caucus, Lord Beaconsfield may perhaps be excused for assuming that Mr. Gladstone sanctioned the propriety of the scarcely complimentary appellation.

Whatever Gladstone may have said or thought of Beaconsfield during these tumultuous years, he had the greatness and the impartiality—when his object was accomplished, the 1874-80 Government destroyed, himself seated in his rival's place, and that rival dead—to select this moment of the return from Berlin as the culminating point of Beaconsfield's renown. A friend, he said, might in July, 1878, have fairly applied to him the stately lines of Virgil—

> Aspice ut insignis spoliis Marcellus opimis
> Ingreditur, victorque viros supereminet omnes,

The enthusiasm of the crowds which welcomed Beaconsfield at Dover and Charing Cross was succeeded by other tributes of popular appreciation and admiration. Parliament endorsed the Treaty, the Lords without a division, the Commons by the great majority of 143, in spite of all Gladstone's efforts and eloquence. Indeed, Hartington did not venture to submit a purely hostile resolution; only what Beaconsfield happily described as 'a string of congratulatory regrets.' Congratulations poured in from legislative bodies and great public meetings in all parts of the British Empire; particularly in Australasia, which realised the importance of Beaconsfield's success in providing for the security of the imperial high-

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way through the Levant. The Prime Minister's colleagues welcomed him with open arms, the Duke of Richmond sending him a Garter badge[1] as a token of his esteem and regard; and if there was a certain disposition in the literary world, always critical of the pyrotechnics of their literary statesman, to stand aloof, Beaconsfield was gratified by the receipt of some Latin verses on the return from Berlin, written by the scholarly Bishop Charles Wordsworth, and translated into English verse by Dean Stanley; and admiration was wrung from one of the finest spirits of the age, John Henry Newman.

To the Bishop of St. Andrews.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Aug.* 26, 1878.—It is the happiest union since Beaumont and Fletcher. I am deeply gratified by such an expression of sympathy from men so distinguished by their learning and piety.

Cardinal Newman to Lord Blachford.

THE ORATORY, *July* 22, 1878.—. . . As to Disraeli's firework, I confess I am much dazzled with it, and wish it well. It is a grand idea, that of hugging from love the Turk to death, instead of the Russian bear, which, as a poem or romance, finds a weak part in my imagination. And then it opens such a view of England, great in the deeds of their forefathers, shewing that they are not degenerate sons, but rising with the occasion in fulfilment of the 'Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito.' And then it is so laughably clever a move, in a grave diplomatic congress—and then it opens such wonderful views of the future—that I am overcome by it. Nor do I see the hypocrisy you speak of.[2]

To the Duke of Richmond.

10, DOWNING STREET, *July* 23, 1878.—I am deeply touched by your letter, and by the interesting and graceful offering, which accompanied it.

We have known each other, now, for more than thirty years, and, often, in trying times; and under any circumstances, it would be agreeable to remember, that there has never been a cloud between us.

[1] Sir Richard Wallace also presented to Beaconsfield the Garter insignia worn by the 3rd Marquis of Hereford ('Lord Monmouth').

[2] Quoted in the *Life of Dean Church*, p. 269.

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But it is only of recent years, that I have had an opportunity of becoming duly acquainted with your great and good qualities; your aptitude for public affairs, your quick intelligence, and that delightful absence of selfishness in your character, which distinguishes your relations with your colleagues.

As for myself, I am proud of your friendship, and can truly subscribe myself, with great affection,—Yours, BEACONSFIELD.

The Conservative party entertained Beaconsfield and Salisbury to dinner in the Riding School at Knightsbridge on July 27; on August 3, the Corporation of the City of London conferred its freedom on them, and held a banquet in their honour. On each occasion Beaconsfield's reception was of the most enthusiastic character, suggesting that he possessed the confidence not only of his own party, but of the people at large. Of his speech at the Riding School we have already quoted the principal passages; in the City he claimed that the outcome of the Berlin Congress had been a general, and, he believed, an enduring, peace in Europe, and he spoke with justifiable hopefulness of the prospects of good government in Asia Minor under the Cyprus Convention.

Montagu Corry to Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING STREET, *July* 29.—Mr. Montagu Corry presents his humble duty to your Majesty. . . . The Banquet in the Duke of Wellington's Riding House was one of the best arranged, though, at the same time, one of the most genuine exhibitions of public feeling ever seen. It was a glorious sight to see five hundred of the proudest peers and sturdiest squires of England accord their fervent welcome to the man who had maintained their country's honour! *He* spoke with extraordinary force and power, and well earned the ringing cheers which again and again—for minutes—burst forth after he had sat down.

Lord Salisbury made an admirable speech, and carried to every heart the conviction, most welcome and important, that your Majesty's two Ministers were entirely of one mind as to the present and future. His reception showed how well he is gaining the confidence of the party! . . .

Mr. Corry feels sure, from what he learns, that this remarkable meeting, and the speeches made there, will have a powerful influence upon the debate and the division in the House of

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Commons this week. He has sometimes of late, heard Conservative Members complain, that they 'never saw their Chief now-a-days.' They have now seen and heard him, and it is already obvious that, with even increased confidence and determination, they will uphold the policy of your Majesty's Government.

To Lady Bradford.

HOUSE OF LORDS, *Aug.* 1.—. . . I can't give a good bulletin of myself, as I suffer from Bradford's enemy, asthma, the present of the east wind. I meant to have kept at home today, but . . . Carnarvon posted up from the country to vindicate his highly susceptible character from an imaginary attack wh. he fancies I made on him the other night. He has just got my answer, and I hope he likes it.

I dined yesterday at the Salisburys', and miladi had a reception in the evening, notwithstanding Goodwood. There were a good many people and the dinner was more amusing than might have been supposed. I sate betn. Mme. Harcourt and Lady Maud. . . .

Lord Salisbury had his blue ribbon and regulation star on, but his solicitor has written to him to say that in some box at the banker's there is a diamond star of the Garter which belonged to his father or some ancestor. I told him he must have it ready by Saturday. . . .

To Queen Victoria.

Aug. 6.—Saturday was a day of triumph. Lord Beaconsfield managed to get thro' it tho' greatly suffering. He is much influenced by the electric fluid, and three days of thunderstorms quite prostrated him. He could have wished, that your Majesty even could have witnessed the scene at Guildhall. It was very picturesque, and admirably arranged. From Charing Cross to the Guildhall, there was a continuous and enthusiastic crowd, and quite spontaneous; no organisation, no committee work.

To-day there has been a most extraordinary scene at the Foreign Office: 700 deputies from nearly 1,000 Conservative Associations, and they passed Lord Salisbury and myself, and they [Lord Salisbury and Lord Beaconsfield] had to shake hands with every member from every part of England, and then to address them, exhausted as Lord Beaconsfield was by standing more than an hour.

To Lady Bradford.

10, DOWNING STREET, *Aug.* 6, '78.—. . . Monty and I are going to the play to-night to see some nonsense, wh. everybody

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is going to see—*Parasol* or *Pinafore*—a burlesque, a sort of thing I hate, but I got into the scrape on Saturday at H[olland] House, with Pss. Mary. She is patroness and we go in her box.

Yesterday's dinner was amusing, as Louise[1] looked her best and talked her best. I sate on her right hand, and D. of Cam. on her left, and Harty-Tarty not too near with Lady Westmorland, the only other lady there. Louise talked a good deal about you, and pretends to love you very much, and I hope she is sincere. She does not think you look so well as she cd. wish, and wishes you wd. take more care of yourself, and lead a quiet life. But who can lead a quiet life with two daughters to attend to! . . .

Aug. 8.—. . . I am quite exhausted. . . . I want to go to bed for a week, or lie on the summer grass, if it wd. not rain.

Except at Wycombe fair, in my youth, I have never seen anything so bad as *Pinafore*. It was not even a burlesque, a sort of provincial *Black-eyed Susan*. Princess Mary's face spoke volumes of disgust and disappointment, but who cd. have told her to go there?

The Treaty of Berlin is Beaconsfield's main international work; by it his reputation as a European statesman must stand or fall. At one time it was the fashion to conclude that, because his vaunted division of Bulgaria into two provinces, of which only one was given political autonomy, lasted no longer than seven years, and was then terminated with England's cheerful acquiescence, therefore the Treaty was a failure, and Beaconsfield's diplomacy was proved to be a futile sham. This judgment has long been abandoned as superficial; it may seem strange that it was ever widely accepted, seeing that the British statesman, who acquiesced in the union of the two provinces in 1885, was Salisbury, Beaconsfield's colleague at Berlin in 1878. The separation of Eastern Rumelia from Bulgaria was in Beaconsfield's mind a means, and not an end. The danger to be guarded against was the complete Russian dominance of the Balkan Peninsula by means of a huge Russianised Bulgaria, which should frustrate the aspirations of all the other Balkan peoples, and should reduce Turkey-in-Europe

[1] Duchess of Manchester, afterwards Duchess of Devonshire.

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to a state of vassalage to Russia. That danger was removed by the provisions of the Treaty. The seven years' delay, which Beaconsfield's insistence on division interposed, gave time for the growth of a national spirit which by 1885 had transformed the Bulgarians from clients and tools of Russia into a people with a strong sense of individuality and independence. This development was hastened by Russia's foolish and shortsighted conduct towards Bulgaria. Having already lost to a large extent the sympathy of Greeks, Serbs, and Rumanians by her neglect of their interests at San Stefano and Berlin, she now contrived, by high-handed and incessant interference in all the affairs of her *protégés*, to alienate even the Bulgarians; and it was to be expected that united Bulgaria—united by her own motion, and in Russia's despite—would in consequence prove rather a bulwark of Turkey against Russia than an outwork of Russia against Turkey. It should also be noted that the united Bulgaria of 1885 was much smaller in extent than the 'big Bulgaria' of the Treaty of San Stefano; that it nowhere reached the Ægean coast, nor did it include Macedonia; and so neither prejudiced Greek and Serbian claims in those regions, nor broke the continuity of Turkish dominion in Europe. The aims of Beaconsfield's policy were therefore secured by the rearrangement of 1885, though the means differed.

The Treaty unquestionably had many imperfections, and not a few of its clauses were never seriously put in force. Still, if we look broadly at its aims and its results, it is impossible not to recognise that what Beaconsfield determined to secure—the safety of the British Empire from the threatening advance of Russia, and the continuance of European peace—he did secure. So far as peace is concerned, whereas, in the months preceding the Treaty, on the top of a desolating struggle between Russia and Turkey, war between Great Britain and Russia appeared to be imminent and war between Austria and Russia probable, none of the six great European Powers—

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Austria, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy,[1] Russia—was at war in Europe during the thirty-six years which intervened between the Treaty and the outbreak of Armageddon in 1914. Russia certainly fought Japan in the Far East, Great Britain engaged in wars in India, Egypt, the Sudan, and South Africa, and France, Germany, and Italy all conducted military operations in connection with their African colonies; but European peace among the Great Powers, though sometimes imperilled, was never broken. A steady continuance of peace in the Balkans was, however, not secured. No arrangement that was possible in the conditions of 1878 could have effected that; it remains indeed to be proved whether the settlement made in the immeasurably better conditions of 1919 and 1920 will be permanently satisfactory. But, at any rate, Balkan conflicts were confined for nearly forty years to the Balkan States themselves; and the dispute of Austria with Serbia in 1914 was rather the pretext than the cause of the Great War.

As regards the threat to the British Empire and its communications by the advance of Russia through European Turkey towards the Mediterranean, and through Asia Minor towards Syria and Egypt on the one hand and Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf on the other, Beaconsfield's success was complete. These movements were definitely stopped, and have never been renewed in arms. That the corresponding Russian advance from Turkestan towards India was stimulated for a while by the check in Europe and Asia Minor is hardly a reflection on the Treaty or on Beaconsfield's work at Berlin, as he was fully alive to the danger and had directed his policy since he came into office towards the attainment of a more 'scientific' north-west frontier for India, the foundations of which he laid before his retirement.

If Cyprus has not been utilised as Beaconsfield intended and expected, it has been partly because there has been

[1] Italy's war with Turkey over Tripoli was rather an African than a European struggle.

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no renewal of Russian activity in Asia Minor, and partly because Egypt, which, from regard for French interests, he deliberately put out of his consideration at Berlin, was subsequently thrown upon our hands owing to French renunciation. That he fully realised British interests in Egypt his actions, speeches, and letters prove; that he anticipated and welcomed a great extension of British influence there in the future may fairly be deduced from his purchase of the Suez Canal shares; but he could not in 1878 have acquired exclusive control of Egypt as a place of arms in the Eastern Mediterranean without a direct breach with our joint controller, France, which would have gravely affected our international position. None who remember the excessive irritation which prevailed in France for twenty years on account of a British occupation of Egypt, in which she had been pressed originally to take a share, will join in the reproaches sometimes thrown on Beaconsfield's memory, even in Liberal quarters, for not having occupied Egypt in 1878, in France's despite, instead of Cyprus.

The principal obstacle which Beaconsfield interposed by the Treaty in the way of Russian ambitions was, of course, a concentrated and strengthened Turkey. For few would now endorse the criticism much heard at the time that Beaconsfield, who claimed to be a friend, had dealt Turkey more mortal blows than her professed enemies. It is now generally recognised that her effective power was increased by the lopping off of outlying provinces which she could neither govern nor defend, and which constituted an unceasing drain upon her resources; which provinces, moreover, might well be turned eventually into buffer States to protect her frontier. But was not this strengthening of Turkey, however excusable from the standpoint of British imperial defence, treason to the general interest of Europe and to the cause of humanity? Did not these demand the withdrawal, to the utmost possible extent, of Christian nationalities from Turkish rule, and the strictest European

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supervision of those whose actual enfranchisement could not for the moment be enforced ?

The answer is that the Treaty, though not satisfactory to extremists on either side, did find a means of largely reconciling apparent incompatibles. Far from neglecting the emancipation of Christian nationalities, the Treaty and the Cyprus Convention withdrew from effective Turkish government both the Bulgarias, in different degrees, the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina, parts of Thessaly and Epirus, a large portion of Armenia, and the island of Cyprus. The transfer of Eastern Armenia to Russia, and the administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria, were calculated in both cases materially to improve the condition of the inhabitants. And, when the Treaty is condemned for prejudicing the establishment of a great South Slavic kingdom by putting the Slavs of Bosnia and Herzegovina under Austria, it has to be remembered that this reinforcement of the already numerous Slavs of Austria-Hungary might well have led to the merger of a Dual in a Triple Empire, in which Slavs should have an equal place and equal rights with Magyars and Austrian Germans.

The Christian nationalities still left under Turkish rule had much to hope from the restored influence of Great Britain in the counsels of the Porte. Those in Asia were benefited directly by the establishment of military consuls under Sir Charles Wilson's leadership; those in Europe would profit indirectly by the ascendency of the British Ambassador at Constantinople, where Layard bade fair to occupy the place once filled by Stratford de Redcliffe. These prospects were ruined by the abrupt change in British policy when Gladstone returned to power in 1880. British threats did indeed wring from a reluctant Turkey overdue concessions to Greece and Montenegro. But that was a small gain to set against the permanent alienation of the Porte, the disappearance of British influence at Constantinople, and the cessation of British power to protect persecuted Christians, either in Asia

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Minor or in European Turkey. In this respect Beaconsfield's policy is open to the serious reproach that it assumed the continuance of his party in office for, at least, another Parliament, so that a reversal would become difficult, if not impossible. And yet no one should have known better than he the mutability of the British electorate.

The place of authority at Constantinople and in Asia Minor vacated by Great Britain was gradually occupied, not by Russia, but by Germany; and the renewed strength which Beaconsfield had given to Turkey came eventually to be used under German direction to hamper and not to promote British interests. But he can hardly be blamed for this. Statesmen must deal with the evils before them. In the middle of the nineteenth century the danger to the free development of, at any rate, the Eastern World was Russia. She was, of course, nothing like so formidable nor so destructive of human liberties as Napoleon at the beginning of that century or Germany at the beginning of the next; but she kept Europe generally in constant uneasiness, while to the British Empire she was a serious menace. She was foiled principally by two British statesmen, Palmerston and Beaconsfield; and by Beaconsfield she was foiled without resort to arms. It has been the duty of later statesmen to provide against the German threat, and they must bear the responsibility.

Looking back at the work of the British Plenipotentiaries at the Berlin Congress after two and a half years' experience, Beaconsfield wrote to Drummond Wolff on November 4, 1880: 'Next to making a tolerable settlement for the Porte, our great object was to break up, and permanently prevent, the alliance of the three Empires, and I maintain there never was a general diplomatic result more completely effected. Of course, it does not appear on the protocols; it was realised by personal influence alone, both with Andrassy and Bismarck.' These are pregnant sentences, which may well be pondered by those who accuse Disraeli of having destroyed the

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concert of Europe by refusing the adherence of Great Britain to the Berlin Memorandum in May, 1876. There was, in fact, at that time no concert of Europe in any real sense. There was a concert of three autocrats—the Emperors of Russia, Austria, and Germany, inspired by Bismarck—which was gradually assuming the direction of free Europe, in the belief that Italy was absorbed in internal development, France crushed and helpless, and England wedded to a policy of non-interference on the Continent. In regard neither to the Andrassy note, nor to the Berlin Memorandum, did the three Empires seek the assistance of the rest of Europe in concerting their policy. They framed their policy by themselves first, and demanded the assent of the popularly governed States afterwards. Such a method of conducting European affairs, if tolerated, would have led to the subordination of the progressive to the non-progressive elements in Europe, of the free to the subservient nations. France and Italy seemed for the moment to be willing to accept this dictation; England, under Disraeli, was not. There could be no real concert of Europe unless the Western Powers took a large share in directing it. That seems a truism to-day; but it was Beaconsfield's policy and personal influence at Berlin which claimed and secured for his country as large a share in directing European affairs as that of any of the three autocrats, and which drove a wedge between the three Empires, making it impossible for them in future, in spite of all Bismarck's dexterous diplomacy, to hold together with sufficient coherence to dictate to Europe. In fact Beaconsfield at Berlin—with no aid from triumphant arms, such as sustained Castlereagh at Vienna and Mr. Lloyd George in Paris—retrieved for Great Britain the right to a potent voice in the settlement of Europe. It was a victory for free institutions in a continent which had been drifting for some years towards autocracy. It was also a vindication of that sane imperialism which he had been returned to power in 1874 to promote.

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CHAPTER X.

THE AFGHAN WAR.

1878.

At the close of the first session of 1878 Beaconsfield was at the height of his renown and popularity. It was the common opinion that a dissolution at that time would have confirmed the Tory Government in power by a substantial majority for another period of five or six years. The adventure must have had its attractions, as time was needed to ensure the permanence of Beaconsfield's Eastern policy just embodied in treaty form. But he and his Cabinet decided, on August 10, not to endeavour to snatch a party victory out of a success in foreign policy. There was no constitutional excuse for dissolving a Parliament which steadily supported Ministers by large majorities, and which had still two years and a half to run. 'It would be like throwing up a rubber at whist,' wrote Sir William Hart Dyke, the Whip, 'whilst holding nothing but good cards.' But virtue was indeed in this case its own, and only, reward. Partly through their own fault, but mainly through disasters abroad and distress at home, for both of which their responsibility was slight, Ministers perceptibly declined in public favour during the remainder of their term of office.

The abounding trade of the early seventies had, in the normal cycle, been succeeded, soon after the change of Government, by a period of depression, which the wars and rumours of wars of the last year or two had no doubt helped to deepen. Wages had to be reduced in one industry after another, with the natural result of serious conflicts between capital and labour, prolonged and

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repeated strikes being sometimes accompanied by outbreaks of lawless violence. Much of the savings of the country was lost by speculative investment in unsound foreign loans; and in the October of this year the failure of the City of Glasgow Bank brought widespread disaster to Scotland and the North of England. Our imperial and foreign trade suffered heavily owing to famines in India and China; and there was now felt fully the backwash caused by the destruction of capital and temporary inflation of trade due to the wars of the sixties and early seventies—the Civil War in America, the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, and the Franco-German War of 1870-71. More serious still in some ways, the ruin which Disraeli and his friends foresaw for the agricultural interest as the result of Peel's corn law legislation, but which had been hitherto postponed by various accidental causes, came at last with full force, grievously aggravated by a succession of bad harvests. Owing to the unlimited entry of cheap food from abroad—which, of course, on the other hand, enabled the artisan better to support his own industrial troubles—agricultural prices tumbled headlong down, neither rents nor wages could be paid, and farms were being thrown up all over the country.

Then, though European peace was secured, the ordinary man was disturbed to find that within a few months Great Britain had two wars on her hands, one in India, and one in South Africa; and he was still more disturbed when disaster befell our troops in Zululand and our Mission at Cabul. The great imperial questions, out of which these two wars sprang, were what mainly occupied Beaconsfield's attention during the last year and a half of his Ministry. But his relation to them was not nearly so close, his direction of them not nearly so complete, as had been the case with the Eastern question. He undoubtedly charged the Viceroy, whom he selected for India, to secure the north-west frontier by a more forward policy than had been recently pursued, and he adopted a policy of confederation for South Africa and authorised

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the annexation of the Transvaal. But the methods of procedure, the times and places for decisive strokes, were in both cases usually chosen by the servants of the Government on the spot, Lytton or Shepstone or Bartle Frere, and chosen in some instances either without communication with the Home Government, or in actual disobedience to its wishes, if not its orders, and without any particular regard for its difficulties in other parts of the world. Beaconsfield and his Cabinet found themselves more than once in the awkward position of having either to accept and support policies which they disapproved and men who had disobeyed or disregarded them, or else to visit great servants of the Crown, strenuous defenders of imperial interests, with reproof or recall. It cannot be maintained that Beaconsfield always emerged from dilemmas of this kind with dignity or success. He had but a short space for rest before he was confronted with the first of these difficulties.

Owing to the labours of Berlin and the excitements of the welcome home, he was, early in August, more than usually eager to get away to the repose and quiet of Hughenden. 'Dr. Kidd sent me out of town to-day,' he wrote to Lady Bradford on Saturday, August 10, 'but that was impossible. I do go, however, on Monday. All I want, I fancy, is quiet and fresh air. We had a Cabinet to-day, wh. lasted more than three hours—the longest I ever knew. But it was our last.' From Hughenden in the following week he told the Queen that he felt the advantage of the comparative calm; 'but, unfortunately, very little upsets [Lord Beaconsfield], and tho' his energy is generally equal to the occasion, there is no longer that continuous flow of power, which becomes the servant of an Empress and a Queen.'

To Anne Lady Chesterfield.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Aug.* 25.—. . . I am extremely unwell, having the bronchitis worse than ever. It exhausts and disgusts me with life. Going to Osborne did me harm, as I knew it would. The slightest social excitement injures me,

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but the visit was inevitable, and the Queen is greatly disappointed that I did not go for a fortnight to Balmoral! It was impossible. My only hope is in a very quiet life, solitude, regular hours, and no talking. I am now quite alone and therefore ought to ensure the latter condition. Monty went from Osborne to Scotland, and I don't expect to see him again for months. I have given orders that none of my other secretaries, and no messenger, except on urgent and critical business, shall come near me. . . . .

To Lady Bradford.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Aug.* 29, '78.—. . . You ask me where I generally lived. In my workshop[1] in the morning, and always in the library in the evening. Books are companions, even if you don't open them. They are at least proof that there are, or were, human beings in the world besides yourself; tho' I cannot say I fear solitude or find it irksome. It is the next best thing to being with those you like very much. . . .

Beaconsfield's anxieties this autumn were largely concerned with the proper execution of the Treaty of Berlin. Neither Russia nor Turkey showed any undue haste in carrying out provisions to which they had originally objected but ultimately agreed. But Beaconsfield was clear that both must be assumed to be acting *bona fide* until the contrary was proved, and that consequently full time must be allowed to both before the Powers resorted to diplomatic or other pressure. He successfully resisted a proposal which, apparently at Austria's instance, Bismarck made for an identic note to the Porte.

From Lord Salisbury.

Private. CHÂLET CECIL, PRÈS DIEPPE, *Sept.* 2, '78.—I enclose a note I received from Waddington two days ago. The marked passage seems to show that the Egyptian business has not excited him. . . . His power of doing harm does not extend far.

At the opposite pole of the horizon the weather looks uglier. Either Kissingen baths have disagreed seriously with Bismarck or the Russians are up to some mischief. I do not profess to guess what; for I can't see what advantage they will get. Anyhow, Bismarck's note, when it comes, must be looked at with suspicion; and my present impression is that we ought

[1] The small study on the first floor. See Vol. III., ch. 6.

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not to accede. To begin bullying the Porte is hardly reasonable when the ratifications have hardly been exchanged a month. Probably I shall run over if the note really makes its appearance.

To Lord Salisbury.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 3, 1878.—It gave me great satisfaction to hear from you this morning.

I think Waddington, tho' he may not always intend it, a somewhat dangerous animal to deal with. Harcourt[1] has taken Harleyford, Sir Wm. Clayton's seat near Marlow, for the season, and, some little time ago, came here in great excitement, with a letter from W., directing him to see you, or me instantly, about the contemplated marriage of P. Napoleon and the P'ss Thyra, wh. he looked upon as a probable revolution in France. If necessary, Harcourt was to read to me their confidential despatches on this subject. I thought I would let him do so, and more frivolous gossip I have seldom perused. When it was over, I told him, which, by an accident, it was in my power to do, that there was not the slightest foundation for his narrative, wh. W. evidently entirely credited.

A week ago, Harcourt drove here with Mme. H., on the pretence of seeing the place, etc., 'not a word of politics to be spoken': but he got me at last in a corner, and was evidently frightened out of his, or Waddington's, wits, about Rivers W[ilson] being Finance Minister in Egypt. I told him, that I had no official information that the post was yet offered to R. W. or, if offered, whether he could, or would accept it, but I hoped, equally for the sake of France and England, that it would be offered and accepted, for it seemed to be the best, if not the only, chance of the two nations getting back any of their money.

I have not the slightest confidence in Waddington; he is feeble and sly, wh. feeble men often are. The only point on wh. I don't agree with you is as to his inability of doing harm. He can do harm enough, and has done a great deal already about Greece. I should not be at all surprised, that he has been stimulating Bismarck. Waddington wants to convey to the world, that France is yet a great Power, tho' it can't, or won't, do great things. All this at the expense of the Porte, alias at our own expense.

I am clear myself, that if we do not take up a very firm and decided line about the Porte, we shall have serious difficulties arise. I think, we must, on no account, join in any note, such as I hear referred to in the journals.

[1] The French Ambassador.

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I think we ought to do more: deprecate altogether its transmission, and say that, while we shall use our utmost efforts to induce the Porte to fulfil the spirit of her engagements, and at this moment, believe she will act accordingly, we feel that her engagements are so large, so, at the same time, extensive and difficult, that the utmost forbearance and indulgence must be extended to her during her operations.

I don't think our fleet should leave the Turkish waters at present, and if it does, I don't think our naval force in the Mediterranean should be reduced. Waddington is quite capable, in that case, of sending a French fleet to Greece, or 'demonstrating' in some manner or other. At present, he will do anything but fight, but his tactics are dangerous, and should be discouraged; if necessary, by a little confidential frankness. We intend to see the Treaty of Berlin fulfilled, but, so long as the Porte is acting *bona fide*, we cannot sanction any recourse to compulsion. . . .

Aug. [*Sept.*] 8.—I have received yr. box, and read its contents with entire satisfaction. It is always a real pleasure to me to find ourselves in accord, wh. will help us in the difficulties, which, I doubt not, we shall have to encounter.

I feel your time at this moment is more valuable than mine, and I certainly should have offered to come up to town, but I have no home there. Downing St. is in the hands of the painters; the first time, probably, since Sir Robert Walpole; and therefore, my visit would be a hurried one, between two trains. I like to consult, and, if possible, sleep over our thoughts, before we come to a decision in the morning. I should, therefore, be delighted to see you here, for the statistics of travel are convenient for such a purpose. . . .

To Lady Bradford.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 7, '78.—. . . I really have nothing to tell you. Solitude mitigates my sufferings, and I have nearly got rid of my bronchitis, but any social excitement, anything wh. breaks the mechanical regularity of my habits, upsets me in a moment. Yesterday I was obliged to have Mr. Turnor down to transact business till four o'ck., when I bid him adieu, with a blessing and a hope I shd. never see him, or any other secretary, again—when I again heard the sound of chariot wheels, and there was the 1st Lord of the Admiralty who had driven over 18 miles, and was obliged to see me. I th[ough]t I shd. have sunk under it, and it led to great labors, all of wh. I had to accomplish myself.

I fear, also, that I shall be otherwise troubled, as Salisbury has come over! This bodes business! . . .

Sept. 10.—. . . The Faery complains that I have not

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written a letter to her for a fortnight, and have communicated only by telegrams. . . .

Sept. 12.—. . . Ld. S[alisbury] came down here on Tuesday, and left the following morn—affairs being most pressing; but as for myself, I have not had a moment since even for meals or sleep—so much to do and so much coming. It is worse than the Congress. . . .

Salisbury came to an agreement at Hughenden with Beaconsfield that they would have nothing to do with the proposed identic note; but subsequently Austria's eagerness in pressing England to join caused the Foreign Secretary for a moment to waver. The Prime Minister, however, stood firm. As he told the Queen, he had 'had anxious moments about the identic note. Fortunately, he knows more now of the character of Continental statesmen, and of some of his own colleagues, than he did before the Berlin Congress. There had been an attempt to override his decision, but he was inexorable; and the result is that Prince Bismarck has absolutely adopted our view, and says we are right.' The following was Beaconsfield's reply to a letter in which Salisbury expressed his uneasiness and hesitation.

To Lord Salisbury.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 20, 1878.—. . . Our joining in the identic note, after having declined to do so, and declined for good reasons, would have the worst effect, and convey an impression of vacillation and perplexity on our part; two qualities which we should always avoid.

Success would hardly justify such a step. But would it succeed? Is it in the power, even if it be in the will, of Turkey, to control events in Bosnia? An identic note, and no results, would be humiliating.

But let us assume that it is in the power of Turkey to manage Bosnia; then England ought to be able to induce her to take the necessary steps without joining in identic notes. You may bully with impunity the Turks in private, provided you uphold them publicly; but strong remonstrances accompanied by identic notes, and such machinery, always fail with them. If the Turks can control the Bosnian insurrection, let our Ambassador point out to them all the evils of their neglecting to do so, and the eventual necessity of England acting with their foes.

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I am ready and willing to give any proof of the sympathy of England which you can recommend—I should not shrink myself from a tripartite treaty such as you intimate. It would not displease Germany; it would please France; and Russia could do nothing.

The situation at present allows, and demands, bold action. Every Power is too embarrassed to act except England. It is a moment when what is called prudence is not wise. We must control, and we must create, events.

As for the rumours about Todleben and his mate, and the Rumanian plébiscite, I should utterly disregard such bugbears. A plébiscite in E. Rumelia, occupied by a Russian army, would only excite indignation.

As for Afghanistan, Russia, in my opinion, will get out of the business as soon, and as well, as she can. There will be no continuity of military operations, and the Russian Mission, instead of being permanent, will ultimately take the form of an Embassy extraordinary and temporary. But we must act with firmness there, as everywhere.

I am rather disgusted about the Egyptian delay. The affair is in the hands of Lingen! who has drawn up, I understand, a great piece, 'grandis et verbosa,' wh. is to be sent to me.

However, the main object will be obtained, and all we can hope is, that Cr. of Exr. Wilson may not find an Egyptian Lingen.

The same policy of patience and hope which Beaconsfield was resolved to pursue as regards Turkish action in Europe, he also desired to extend to Russian action in Central Asia. It was natural, he felt, that when we brought Indian troops to the Mediterranean as a reminder to Russia of our power and determination, Russia should retaliate, as she did, by sending a formal mission to Cabul, and by preparing columns of troops in Turkestan to threaten India. He believed that, now that peace was signed, Russia would recall the mission and the troops; and he was confirmed in this view by Gortchakoff's somewhat general assurances.

From Prince Gortchakoff.

Confidential. BADEN, *Sept.* 16, 1878.—This morning I received your confidential letter of the 11th September. I fully persevere in the conviction that every step which tends to terminate unwise jealousies between two great States consolidates

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the peace which is in both our wishes. No continuity of military demonstrations in the direction of Afghanistan is contemplated on our part. We don't research any particular influence, but merely good relations which should in no way inspire any apprehension to England.

I confirm the wishes we exchanged at Berlin, and persevere in the hope that they will come to a practical conclusion by the assistance of an elevated mind.

Accordingly, Beaconsfield was anxious that the Indian Government should take no precipitate action. Lytton, the Viceroy, on the other hand, with perhaps a truer appreciation of the Afghan problem, was convinced that the time had come for a forward movement in fulfilment of the charge entrusted to him when Disraeli selected and sent him out to India in 1876. That charge, as we have seen,[1] was to provide for the permanent security of the north-western frontier, which was endangered by the steady advance of Russia in Turkestan, and by the growing intimacy of the relations between General Kaufmann, the Russian Governor of Turkestan, and the Ameer of Afghanistan, Sher Ali. The map might suggest that the barren and rugged mountains on this frontier were a sufficient protection. But history taught us that invader after invader had penetrated their barrier and overrun the Indian plains; and, indeed, that it was only the British conqueror who had reached India by any other approach than that across or beside Afghanistan. Accordingly 'the Prime Minister,' writes Lytton's daughter, 'strongly impressed upon the new Viceroy his opinion that the policy of Russia gave cause for extreme anxiety and watchfulness; and that it was essential, even at the risk of failure, the possibility of which could not be denied, that an attempt should be made to induce the Ameer of Cabul to enter into more satisfactory relations with our Government; or, if such a result proved impracticable, that he should at least be compelled to show clearly the attitude which he intended to hold towards Russia and towards ourselves. Anything, Mr. Disraeli thought,

[1] See Vol. V., ch. 11.

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was better than the state of absolute uncertainty and suspicion in which our relations with Afghanistan were involved.'[1]

The instructions which Lytton, on taking up his post, received from Salisbury, the Secretary of State, were to endeavour to obtain the assent of the Ameer to the reception of a friendly mission; and, in case of success, he was authorised to give him assurances as to subsidies, recognition of the *de facto* succession of his favourite son, and material assistance in the event of a clear case of unprovoked aggression. But, in order that such assistance might be effectual, the Ameer must admit British agents to frontier positions. Should the Ameer refuse to receive the mission, his estrangement would be beyond a doubt, and the Government of India might have to reconsider their whole policy towards Afghanistan.

The first year of Lytton's Viceroyalty was largely occupied with repeated but unavailing efforts to come to an understanding with the Ameer on these lines. Lytton was given a wide discretion; and he tried every means to get into friendly relation, culminating in a conference held at Peshawur in the early months of 1877 between Sir Lewis Pelly and two of the Ameer's principal Ministers. This conference, however, finally broke down on the absolute refusal of the Ameer, who claimed British material support, to give British officers access to his frontier posts. The reception of a permanent British agent in Cabul was never even asked of him, so careful was Lytton of Afghan susceptibilities. But Sher Ali was by this time deeply committed to Russia, and he even endeavoured, with little result, to stir up a holy war against British India among the wild tribes bordering on the Punjab. In spite of this failure to bring the Ameer to reason, Lytton's policy in these early days added enormously to the strength of the north-west frontier of India by the Treaty of Jacobabad, concluded with the Khan of Khelat in December, 1876; by which the great

[1] *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, pp. 28, 29.

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province of Baluchistan, lying between Afghanistan and the Indian Ocean, was brought within the orbit of Great Britain, and the right was obtained to station British troops at Quetta, a mountain bastion on the southern flank of Afghanistan, over against Candahar. Moreover, the defiance thrown out by the Ameer in calling the frontier tribes to a holy war was met by arrangements for strengthening British influence among them, especially at Chitral and Gilgit in the north. These arrangements involved both risks of serious complications, and also military operations against the Jowakis; but Beaconsfield was decided in his support of the Viceroy.

To Lord Salisbury.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *April* 1, 1877.—. . . I have no doubt whatever, as to our course; we must, completely and unflinchingly, support Lytton. We chose him for this very kind of business. Had it been a routine age, we might have made, what might be called, a more prudent selection, but we foresaw what would occur, and indeed saw what was occurring; and we wanted a man of ambition, imagination, some vanity, and much will—and we have got him. He reminds me of Ld. Wellesley, physically and morally, and may have as eminent a career. Wellesley wrote Latin verses instead of English ones; that was the fashion of the day. . . .

After the failure of the Peshawur Conference all communications with the Ameer ceased, and Lytton began to contemplate the breaking up, rather than the consolidation and support, of the Afghan power as the proper aim of British policy. In this extreme development of the 'forward' theory, however, he met with decided discouragement from home; and, in the absence of further provocation from Cabul, he bided his time. He warmly seconded, if he did not suggest, the despatch of troops from India to the Mediterranean in order to remind Russia, at the critical moment in the spring of 1878, of the solidarity and material strength of the Empire, and he busied himself with preparations against a possible Russian attack; but he took no action on the frontier, till the Russian Mission under General Stoletoff appeared at

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Cabul in July. To Lytton this was a decisive event. He could not regard it merely as the natural Russian reply to British preparations, but rather as an open breach by the Ameer of his obligations to British India. It is true that the Ameer protested against the coming of the Mission, but he took no military action to prevent its advance, he received Stoletoff at Cabul with honour, and there is no doubt that he signed some sort of treaty or convention with him. Conduct of this kind could not be tolerated in a ruler who looked to Britain for the protection of his independence and who yet had for years evaded or declined the reception of any Mission from the Viceroy of India. Lytton decided at once that the only suitable course for the Indian Government was to despatch a Mission of its own to Cabul, and, this time, to insist on its reception with becoming honours. He obtained the sanction of the India Office, selected a competent and experienced officer, Sir Neville Chamberlain, and sent the Mission forward, taking care that the public in India and outside should realise the serious importance of this new departure in policy. Beaconsfield, and still more Salisbury, deprecated this haste, in view of Russia's disposition to retreat. Cranbrook, the Indian Secretary, supported the Viceroy; and Beaconsfield, though annoyed by Lytton's tendency to force the hand of the Home Government, admitted the strength of his case and admired the ability with which he defended his action.

To Lord Cranbrook.

Confidential. HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 12, '78.—I have read with some alarm the V-Roy's telegram. It appears, that Lord Lytton cd. not have been kept *au fait* to the communications, that have taken place, and are taking place, betn. H.M.'s Government and that of Russia, on the subject of Afghanistan. If this be the case, I think it is deeply to be deplored.

As far as they have proceeded, and as far as I can now judge, the explanations of the Russian Govt. are satisfactory, and the whole matter would have quietly disappeared, the Russian

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projects having been intended for a contemplated war with this country, wh., I trust, is now out of the question.

What injurious effect Lytton's policy, ostentatiously, indiscreetly, but, evidently, officially announced, in the Calcutta correspondence of *The Times* of yesterday, may produce, I cannot presume to say. But I am alarmed, and affairs require, in my opinion, your gravest attention.

If Ld. Lytton has ventured on these steps with full acquaintance with our relations with Russia on the subject of Afghan-[ista]n, he has committed a grave error; if he have been left in ignorance of them, our responsibility is extreme.

I won't go into any details as to his views, assuming, for argument's sake, that some course was necessary; but I must remark, that the unconditional guarantee of the Afghan territories ought to be well considered before sanctioned. . . .

Private. Sept. 13.—Our despatches crossed. I should not have written mine, had I previously received yrs.

I have read all yr. documents, printed and MS. Lytton grapples with his subject, and grasps it like a man. I always thought very highly of his abilities, but this specimen of them elevates my estimate. With his general policy I agree, in great measure—but the all-important question, wh. disturbs me, immediately arises—is he acquainted with the negotiations now going on with Russia ?

And if he be not, will the announcement of his views and projects in *The Times* injuriously affect our position with that Power ?

Confidential. Sept. 17.—I have yours of the 13th, and, by this post, return all the Lytton papers, which I have read with the utmost attention.

I have not yet seen the answer from Livadia, but from the tel. of its contents, forwarded by Mr. Plunket, it is unsatisfactory. You have no doubt also received this tel.

I am convinced the country requires that we shall act with decision and firmness on this Afghan question. So far as I can judge, the feeling is strong, and rising, in the country. So long as they thought there was 'Peace with Honor' the conduct of the Government was popular, but if they find there is no peace, they will soon be apt to conclude there is also no honor.

With Lytton's general policy I entirely agree. I have always been opposed to, and deplored, 'masterly inactivity.'

As to his instructions to our Envoy, I shd. leave them to your sound criticism, and good sense, and experience in public affairs, but I think there is no doubt that there shd. be no delay in the Mission. . . .

Confidential. Sept. 22.—There can be no Cabinets now,

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and matters must be settled by myself, and the Secretaries of State for For. Affr. and India.

Under these circumstances, when you and the V-Roy agree, I shall, as a general rule, always wish to support you.

No doubt Salisbury's views, under ordinary circumstances, would be prudent; but there are occasions when prudence is not wisdom. And this is one. There are times for action. We must control, and even create events.

No doubt our Envoy will make the best terms he can. He will, of course, not show all his cards at once, but I am clearly of opinion that what we want, at this present moment, is to prove our ascendency in Afghanistan, and, to accomplish that, we must not stick at trifles. . . .

Confidential. Sept. 26.—Yours of the 24th reached me this morning. I am not satisfied with the position, as nothing could justify Lytton's course except he was prepared to act, and was in a situation wh. justified the responsibility of disobeying the orders of H.M. Government.

He was told to wait until we had received the answer from Russia to our remonstrance. I was very strong on this, having good reasons for my opinion. He disobeyed us. I was assured by Lord Salisbury that, under no circumstances, was the Khyber Pass to be attempted. Nothing would have induced me to consent to such a step. He was told to send the Mission by Candahar. He has sent it by the Khyber, and received a snub, wh. it may cost us much to wipe away.

When V-Roys and Comms.-in-chief disobey orders, they ought to be sure of success in their mutiny. Lytton, by disobeying orders, has only secured insult and failure.

What course we ought, now, to take is a grave affair.

To force the Khyber, and take Cabul, is a perilous business. Candahar we might, probably, occupy with ease, and retain.

These are only jottings. I have the utmost confidence in yr. judgment and firmness, but I shall never feel certain, now, whether your instructions are fulfilled.

To the Duke of Richmond.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 24.—You are very kind to me; you make much of me; you feed me with delicate cates; and I am very ungrateful for not sooner acknowledging all your gifts; but you must pardon a hermit, who lives in entire solitude, and gets every day more incapable of the private duties of life.

To call the Cabinet together would agitate all Europe, and I should think the V-Roy was quite prepared for the probable incident that has occurred. I telegraphed yesterday to Hardy, but I have not yet his answer. It is unfortunate, at such a

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moment, that the Sec. of S. for For. affairs should be at Dieppe and Sec. for India at Balmoral. We are terribly scattered; naturally in Sept., but events happen every day. They have no recess and no holidays. I think with firmness we shall settle all the other things and this too.

To Lord Salisbury.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Oct.* 3, 1878.—I have been obliged to summon the Cabinet. I found they were talking all sorts of nonsense over the country; especially some in whose prudence I still had some lingering trust; and there were already 'two parties in the Cabinet,' and 'all that.'

I have given the deepest attention and study to the situation and read with becoming consideration all Lytton's wonderful MS. pamphlets; wh. are admirable both in their grasp and their detail; and this is my opinion. His policy is perfectly fitted to a state of affairs in which Russia was our assailant; but Russia is not our assailant. She has sneaked out of her hostile position, with sincerity in my mind, but scarcely with dignity, and if Lytton had only been quiet and obeyed my orders, I have no doubt that, under the advice of Russia, Shere Ali would have been equally prudent.

However, it is not so, and we have received a *coup*, which was needlessly encouraged. We can't let the matter remain as it is, but our retort, tho' dignified and authoritative, ought to be moderate. It is not a *casus belli*, after the withdrawal of Russia, and if we had been quiet, we need have done nothing. I fear you will smile at my specific for the occasion, and that it will remind you of my ancient proposals about Gallipoli, but I think it is a case for 'material guarantee.' That will gain time, and that is, in my opinion, all that is required.

But can we take a material guarantee without calling Parliament together? That would be terrible. The Act is now under the consideration of the Ld. Chancellor, and he will enlighten us. . . .

Beaconsfield's last three letters were written after receipt of the news of the forcible stoppage of Chamberlain's Mission by order of the Ameer at Ali Musjid, the fort at the entrance of the Khyber Pass. It was a deliberate affront, and the Viceroy desired to meet it with a declaration of war. But neither Beaconsfield nor the majority of his colleagues were prepared for so drastic a course. A meeting of the Cabinet on October 4 was indecisive,

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and Beaconsfield invited Cranbrook to Hughenden to discuss the problem. The guest wrote in his diary that his host was 'disturbed about India because Russia is taking advantage of our embarrassment in India, and, as Corry says, it is a "black moment."'

To Lady Bradford.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Oct.* [? 9 or 10].—. . . The news this morning is so black that I do not at present well see how a November meeting [of Parliament] can be avoided. Monty has gone up to town to-day and will see Ld. Cranbrook, who is also there to-day, and I hope will succeed in sending him down here. It is terrible for all of us to be so scattered. This critical state of affairs need not have happened, and cd. not have, if my orders had not been disobeyed. This makes it more grievous. I wrote to you, a month ago I shd. think, that I hoped I had settled the Afghan business, but alas! I did not reckon on distant and headstrong counsels. . . .

To Queen Victoria.

HUGHENDEN, *Oct.* 11, '78.—. . . Mr. Corry went up to town yesterday to make a reconnaissance about Mr. Leighton[1] and his prospects, and Lord Beaconsfield will inform your Majesty of the result as soon as he receives it. He is desirous himself, for the honor of English Art, that Mr. Leighton should succeed to an office for which his personal accomplishments highly qualify him. . . .

Oct. 15.—. . . The state of affairs as regards Russia is more harassing than perilous. If strong protests are made and continued against the conduct of the Russian Government, and the affairs of Afghanistan terminate to the satisfaction of your Majesty, Russia will recede from this new position.[2] If, on the other hand, the Afghanistan settlement be not as speedy and decisive as is hoped and expected, it will still be expedient to continue negotiations with Russia, while, at the same time, we shall be maturing some great stroke, which will effectually vindicate the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin.

The situation is similar to that of the occupation of Syria and Asia Minor by the Egyptians, backed by France, and in the teeth of the remonstrances of Y.M. Government. Lord Palmerston continued his negotiations with M. Thiers, thro'

[1] The reference is to Leighton's candidature for the Presidency of the Royal Academy, which was successful.

[2] Russia was showing a disposition to delay the evacuation of the Turkish territories she occupied in Europe.

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M. Guizot, until he had concluded alliances which allowed him to drop the diplomatic mask, and to sweep the Egyptians, in the teeth of France, from the countries which they persisted in occupying. The state of Europe is such that Lord Beaconsfield believes that combinations may, in due time, be realised, which will bring about an analogous result.

Lord and Lady Odo Russell have been here on a visit of explanation, and to receive condolences on their cruel disappointment in their not being able to receive the honors which your Majesty was graciously pleased to express your Majesty's readiness to confer on them. It seems that the Duke of Bedford has revoked the promised endowment of the peerage, as he is advised that it is improper for a member of the House of Russell to accept a distinction on the advice of a Tory Minister. There is no doubt, as Lord Beaconsfield assured the Ambassador, that the acceptance of a peerage for distinguished public service, such as the winning of a battle, or the signature of a treaty, involved no political relations with the Minister of the time. According to the reverse doctrine, had the Whig party been in office, Sir Arthur Wellesley would have continued only a Knight of the Bath during the whole of the Peninsular Campaign. The Duke of Bedford is the wealthiest of your Majesty's subjects, his income absolutely exceeding £300,000 *per annum*; but, as he observed to a friend of Ld. Beaconsfield, very recently, that His Grace considered accumulation was the only pleasure of life and that he never retired to rest satisfied, unless he could trace that he had saved, that day, at least a five pound note, Lord Beaconsfield fears it may not be easy to remove the Duke's constitutional objections. However, Lord Beaconsfield advised Lord Odo not to deem the affair concluded, and said that he should not formally advise your Majesty at once of what had taken place, in the hope that the difficulty, so unjustly raised, might be removed.[1]

Lord Beaconsfield had long and exhaustive conversations with Lord Cranbrook, and hopes that he left Hughenden in a profitable state of mind.

Since Lord Beaconsfield wrote thus far, the first Lord of the Admiralty has driven over to this place. It is evident that he is very anxious about Cyprus, and altho' he had relinquished all intention of going there, and has sent his Admirals to examine Malta, which was necessary, the question of some member of the Ministry visiting Cyprus may arise. He will consult the Secretaries of State for F.O. and India on Thursday morning next, and if they are of opinion that he should go,

[1] The difficulty was not removed; but, when Gladstone returned to power, the peerage (Ampthill) was again offered and accepted.

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he will submit the case to your Majesty for your Majesty's consideration. His absence would hardly exceed three weeks, as he can reach Cyprus in five days.[1] Lord Beaconsfield reminded him that he was on the Balmoral roster. . . .

WESTON,[2] SHIFNAL, *Oct.* 18, '78.—. . . It is wise that the fountain of honor should flow freely in the Colonies. . . .

Lord Beaconsfield is deeply interested your Majesty is reading *Coningsby*. It would be presumption in him to hope that your Majesty would ever deign to make any critical remarks to him on its pages, but perhaps, some day, when he may have the honor and happiness of being in your Majesty's presence, your Majesty may allude to the subject. . . .

A Cabinet was held on October 25, to come to a final decision about Lytton's Afghan policy; and Beaconsfield gave the Queen a lively account of what he characterised as 'one of the most remarkable meetings' that he remembered.

To Queen Victoria.

HUGHENDEN, *Oct.* 26, '78.—Meeting of the Cabinet yesterday on the affairs of Afghanistan. Lord Beaconsfield, after a few preliminary observations, the object of which was to prevent recurrence in the discussion to what was passed and inevitable, called upon Secretary Lord Cranbrook to lay before the Cabinet the present position of affairs, which he did, and concluded by recommending the Cabinet to adopt the proposals of Lord Lytton. He was followed by the Lord Chancellor, who said that the projected proclamation, proposed by Lord Lytton, was a declaration of war; that Parliament must be called together, and the first question that would be asked would be, What was the *casus belli?* Lord Cairns saw none. The Lord Chancellor then analysed the papers before the Cabinet, and showed that the Ameer had acted towards the Russians with the same reluctance to receive them as he had exhibited to the envoy of the Viceroy; that it was a fair inference from the papers that the Ameer, when he had got rid of the Russians, would have received the English; that inference would certainly be drawn by Parliament. He spoke with great power, earnestness, and acuteness, and was evidently highly displeased with the conduct of the Viceroy.

[1] Smith and Stanley, the ministers for the Navy and the Army, paid a short visit to Cyprus this autumn.

[2] Beaconsfield paid short visits in the middle of this month to the Bradfords at Weston, and to Lady Chesterfield at Bretby, and Lady Bradford came to Hughenden for a day or two at the end of the month.

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The Leader of the House of Commons followed the Lord Chancellor, and said he was about to ask the same question—What was the *casus belli?* As at present advised, he could find none, and was sure our party would not support us in the Commons. He spoke at length and very earnestly.

Mr. Secretary Cross entirely agreed with the Leader of the House of Commons. He saw no case.

The Marquis of Salisbury said that the Viceroy was 'forcing the hand of the Government,' and had been doing so from the very first; he thought only of India, and was dictating, by its means, the foreign policy of the Government in Europe and Turkey. He had twice disobeyed orders: first in acting on the Khyber Pass; 2nd, in sending the Mission contrary to the most express and repeated orders that he was not to do so, till we had received an expected despatch from Russia, and never without the precise instructions of the Ministry in England; that, even now, he was not prepared to act even if we permitted him to do so. He spoke with great bitterness of the conduct of the Viceroy, and said that, unless curbed, he would bring about some terrible disaster.

Lord Cranbrook spoke in answer to the preceding speakers, taking the strong Indian view of affairs, and said the *casus belli* was formed by an aggregate of hostile incidents on the part of the Ameer.

In this critical state of affairs, there being now silence, Lord Beaconsfield gave his opinion. He said it would doubtless be dangerous to summon Parliament to sanction a war, if our *casus belli* was not unimpeachable; but he was of opinion that a demonstration of the power and determination of England was at this moment necessary; that instead of the proposed manifesto of the Viceroy, which the Lord Chancellor informed them was a declaration of war, he would propose that a strong column should pass the frontiers and occupy the Kurram Valley, all our preparations in other quarters simultaneously proceeding, and that the Viceroy should issue a note, declaring that this invasion was not intended as an hostile act, but as the taking of a 'material guarantee' that justice should be obtained for the English demand. The occupation of the Principalities by Russia before the Crimean War was quoted as a precedent. It was shown such a step was in the nature of 'reprisals' and which were sanctioned by public law, and not considered as active hostilities.

The Duke of Richmond strongly approved of these remarks. Lord Salisbury said such a course would content him—in demonstrating power, and not necessarily leading to any disaster. The Lord Chancellor and the House of Commons members, following him, murmured approbation, when

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suddenly Lord Cranbrook startled us all by saying, that he would not undertake the responsibility of such a course; that his own opinion was for war, immediate and complete; that he believed it inevitable sooner or later, and very soon; that the 'material guarantee' project was a half measure, and would be looked upon as an act of timidity; and secondly, that he would prefer continuing our preparations, postponing the inevitable campaign, to any middle course, and the more so because he would frankly confess that he was not altogether satisfied with the military preparations of the Viceroy; that Lord Lytton was acting in opposition to the military members of his Council—first in not employing as they thought sufficient English troops, and secondly in refusing to retain the reliefs, which Lord Cranbrook on his own responsibility, and in opposition to the opinion of Lord Lytton, had ordered to remain.

After this extraordinary statement on the part of the Secretary of India, in addition to the fact that none of the forces had as yet arrived at their stations, and that all was matter of calculation and estimate, there seemed only one course to take. The military preparations were ordered to be continued and completed, and even on a greater scale, while, in order to strengthen our case for Parliament, it was agreed that another message to the Ameer, to be submitted, before transmission, to the Cabinet, should be prepared and sent.

This is not a complete, and perhaps a feeble, but a faithful, sketch of one of the most remarkable meetings of a Cabinet that Lord Beaconsfield well remembers. It is certainly unfortunate that the Afghan business should have been precipitated, which was quite unnecessary, for we have much on our hands at this moment, and the utmost energy and resources of the country may have to be appealed to by your Majesty's Government; but Lord Beaconsfield himself, tho' anxious, looks forward to the future without dismay, and Lord Salisbury is prepared to support Lord Beaconsfield in some steps, which, if necessary, will be of a very decided character.

This letter shows the great reluctance with which the Cabinet, and even its chief, entered upon the Afghan War. They felt that they had been unduly hustled by Lytton, though they were eventually convinced that his policy must be supported—and supported, as the Queen urged and Beaconsfield agreed, with as much cordiality as if there had been no initial difference of opinion. The ultimatum to the Ameer, which the Cabinet authorised,

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demanded an apology in writing for the affront at Ali Musjid, and the reception of a permanent British Mission in Afghanistan; and it gave him till November 20 to reply. In the interval came Lord Mayor's Day, and Beaconsfield went to stay at Hatfield at the beginning of the month to consult with Salisbury on the line to be taken in the Guildhall speech.

To Queen Victoria.

HUGHENDEN, *Oct.* 31, '78.—Lord Beaconsfield . . . goes to Hatfield to-morrow, and will remain there, more or less, until Lord Mayor's day is past. It is necessary that some unmistakable expression of the policy of your Majesty's Government should be made on that day, and Lord Beaconsfield must be in daily communication with Lord Salisbury on its nature. . . .

Lord Beaconsfield hopes your Majesty will graciously confer the honor of Knighthood on the Lord Mayor. There is some murmuring in the city as to the scanty honors which have been granted to the municipality, but, in truth, when Lord Mayors began to believe that they had a vested interest in the honorable and territorial title of Baronet, it became necessary to check their unreasonable ambition. But Knightbood in the City Lord Beaconsfield thinks should be rather encouraged. . . .

To Lady Bradford.

[HATFIELD], *Nov.* 4.—I came down here on Friday and have done much business. They wish me to remain permanently during the month of Cabinets, but tho' they are most kind, and there is some convenience in daily intercourse with the Secretary of State, I sigh for 'my crust of bread and liberty,' and return to town to-morrow, Monty's house being my home. . . .

There is no party here at present, but somebody comes every day and stays for 8 and 40 hours. Monty is of course here, and is, I perceive, a great favorite with all the members of the family. . . . The daughters of the house keep everybody alive; always on horseback, and in scrapes, or playing lawn tennis even in twilight. The evening passes in chorus singing —all the airs of *Pinafore*. It's a distraction both for Salisbury and myself from many cares.

Your letter pleased me very much, and I was glad the H[ughende]n visit was not a failure. I wish you to like my home, to use a mild word.

10, DOWNING STREET, *Oct.* [*Nov.*] 8.—. . . I dined on Wednesday at Lady Marian's, a farewell dinner to the beauti-

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ful Louise and Lorne.[1] Marian just arrived to a long uninhabited house, all her heating apparatus out of gear and wouldn't work—never knew a house so cold, and feeble wood fires. The company never got over it. . . . I got home and drenched myself with hot cognac and water, and was not so much injured on the morrow as I expected.

Yesterday a Cabinet and afterwards a real farewell dinner at the Lornes'; house very warm (to make up for the former day), exquisite dinner, tho' I cd. not partake of it, and there were too many luxuries; a very small party, but rather amusing. Prince Leopold was there, in his blue ribbon, and full of talk. I sate betn. our hostess and him. The Coutts Lindsays, Abergavenny (your Hughenden friend), the Bertie Mitfords. . . . Lorne the most genial of hosts, and directed his conversation much to yr. humble servant, who cd. not keep up the ball, for I never for a moment understood what he was talking about. . . .

It was clearly impossible to say much at Guildhall about the Afghan dispute, as we were awaiting a reply to the ultimatum. But most Prime Ministers in Beaconsfield's place would probably have justified Ministerial action by a short statement of the wrongs which we had suffered at the Ameer's hands, culminating in the repulse of a British Mission by force after the reception of a Russian Mission with honour. Commonplace of this sort, however, was uncongenial to Beaconsfield. His attention was fixed, as he assumed that of the nation to be, on safeguarding the north-west frontier. The danger of invasion of India from Asia Minor and from the valley of the Euphrates had been averted, he maintained, by the Cyprus Convention, which gave us 'a strong place of arms,' and secured the Sultan in the possession of his Asiatic dominions, providing for their regeneration under our influence. On the 'matter of immediate interest' what he said was this:

Our north-western frontier is a haphazard and not a scientific frontier. It is in the power of any foe so to embarrass and disturb our dominion that we should be obliged to maintain the presence of a great military force in that quarter, entailing on the country a proportionate expenditure. These are

[1] Lord Lorne had been appointed, on Beaconsfield's recommendation, Governor-General of Canada.

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unquestionably great evils, and former Viceroys have had their attention called with anxiety to the state of our frontier. Recently, however, some peculiar circumstances have occurred in that part of the world, which have convinced Her Majesty's Government that the time has arrived when we must terminate all this inconvenience and prevent all this possible injury. With this view we have made arrangements by which, when completed, in all probability at no distant day, all anxiety respecting the north-western frontier of India will be removed. We shall live, I hope, on good terms with our immediate neighbours, and not on bad terms, perhaps, with some neighbours that are more remote.

Several of Beaconsfield's colleagues, and particularly Cranbrook, the Indian Secretary, realised the imprudence of this passage while their chief uttered it. Northcote wrote to Lady Northcote next day: 'The chief spoke very well, and was very well received. We were, however, rather dismayed by what he said as to Indian frontier policy; and Cranbrook, Salisbury, and Cross pulled very long faces over the "rectification" passage.' It would be only too easy to represent it—and the Liberal party and press hastened to do so—as an admission that we were wantonly making war in order to establish a scientific frontier. Undoubtedly it was the policy both of Beaconsfield and of Lytton to secure, after the defeat of Sher Ali, a line of frontier more defensible than the existing one. But it was no quest of a scientific frontier, but the intolerable conduct of Sher Ali towards the British Government, culminating in the insolent stoppage of Chamberlain's Mission, which had produced the ultimatum, and which, if the Ameer refused to comply with the ultimatum, would bring about war.

This passage, however, was merely an episode in a speech which dealt mainly with the European situation and the execution of the Treaty of Berlin. Difficulties in Bosnia, Albania, Eastern Rumelia, and Rumania, and the refusal hitherto of Turkey to revise her frontier with Greece, had given opportunity for criticism to suggest that the Treaty on which the British Government had prided itself was so much waste paper. In reply to this shallow

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carping, Beaconsfield pointed out that time was always allowed for the fulfilment of a treaty's terms, and that in the present case not half, not much more than a third, of the period prescribed had elapsed. Nevertheless, already, under the provisions of the Treaty, Russia had retired from Constantinople and from the Straits of Gallipoli, and had restored Erzeroum to the Porte, while the Sultan had surrendered the fortresses on the Danube and Batoum had been given up without the shedding of a drop of blood; moreover, international commissions were actively at work arranging the new lines of demarcation created at Berlin. These were the most considerable points of the Treaty; and all this had been done in three months. No intimation had been received from any of the signatories that it was their desire or intention to evade the complete fulfilment of its conditions. It was the policy and determination of Her Majesty's Government that the Treaty should be carried out in spirit and to the letter; and they would, if necessary, appeal to the people of this country to support them in that policy with all their energy and all their resources. But he did not believe that could be necessary. He disregarded current gossip to a contrary effect. 'The government of the world is carried on by Sovereigns and statesmen, and not by anonymous paragraphers, or by the hare-brained chatter of irresponsible frivolity.' On Lord Mayor's Day there was a 'chance of hearing the voice of sense and truth.'

On September 15 Beaconsfield had written to the Queen, in reference to 'Lord Palmerston's "dangerous man,"' Gladstone: 'The article in the *N[orth] American Review*, disparaging his own country, the country of which he was chief Minister, and acknowledging its decline and fall, fills Lord Beaconsfield with amazement.' It was clearly this article that Beaconsfield had in his mind in composing the fine peroration of his Guildhall speech; and subsequent history has vindicated his confidence in the imperial capacity of his countrymen.

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I know there are some who think that the power of England is on the wane. We have been informed lately that ours will be the lot of Genoa and Venice and Holland. But, my Lord Mayor, there is a great difference between the condition of England and those picturesque and interesting communities. We have, during ages of prosperity, created a nation of 34,000,000; a nation who are enjoying, and have long enjoyed, the two greatest blessings of civil life—justice and liberty. A nation of that character is more calculated to create empires than to give them up; and I feel confident, if England is true to herself, if the English people prove themselves worthy of their ancestors, if they possess still the courage and determination of their forefathers, their honour will never be tarnished and their power will never diminish. The fate of England is in the hands of England; and you must place no credit on those rumours which would induce you to believe that you have neither the power nor the principle to assert that policy which you believe is a policy of justice and truth.

To Lady Bradford.

S. Audley St.,[1] *Nov.* 11, '78.—. . . Saturday was a great, I believe I might say a complete, success. The party is what is called on its legs again, and jingoism triumphant! In a very mixed assembly, as Guildhall ever is, there was enthusiasm as far as concerned me, not merely cheering, but rising in their places of a 1,000 guests, and waving of kerchiefs and all that, napkins included.

My voice was queer in the morning, but remedies got it all right, and the Ld. Chan[cello]r says it was never more powerful or clear. All our people, all people, and the foreign Ambassadors esp[eciall]y, in high spirits. Quite ashamed to write this egotistical trash, wh. is only for your dear eyes.

Nov. 13.—. . . Our accounts from the Continent to-day are all favorable, and the Guildhall speech seems to have done what I intended. . . .

Nov. 16.—Going to Sandringham. . . . The Faery has just telegraphed that she highly disapproves of my going: 'most imprudent, running great risk, cold stormy weather. . . .' Go to S. I must. I can't tell the Faery the exact reason, but you will remember last year and what occurred.[2] . . .

Nov. 19.—There was rather an agreeable party at S[andringham]. The Manchesters, Salisburys, D. of Sutherland, Beust, Mrs. Standish, ourselves, Leighton, Oliphant. . . .

[1] Corry's house.

[2] Beaconsfield excused himself in 1877 from going to Sandringham, and then went to Weston.

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Prince Hal was very gracious, agreeable, and in high feather; and very proud of having four Knights of the Garter at dinner. . . .

The Cabinet meets to-morrow, and will have to decide whether Parliament is to be summoned. It is vexatious, for the reason is only technical, for tho' the language of the Act of Parliament is ambiguous, I can't help feeling myself that an interpretation favorable to not meeting might be fairly given to it. There are some, however, who fancy that the cry of the Opposition of our governing without Parliament may take the fears and fancy of John Bull, who is sometimes apt to be hastily headstrong.

Sir Stafford Northcote to Lady Northcote.

11, DOWNING STREET, *Nov.* 19.—. . . The Chief has written a saucy letter, declining to receive the deputation of thoughtful Liberals, and remarking that he has already had ample opportunities of making himself acquainted with Lord Lawrence's views. . . .

Lord Odo Russell to Montagu Corry.

Private. BRITISH EMBASSY, BERLIN, *Nov.* 23, '78.—. . . I am rejoiced to say that Ld. Beaconsfield's great speech at the Mansion House [? Guildhall] has produced a most excellent impression in Berlin and indeed throughout Germany. It is most remarkable and refreshing to see how the Oriental policy of H.M.G., in, and since, the Congress, has elevated England in the eyes of the Continent.

What a marvellous and delightful change for the better, since the day when I first had the satisfaction of an exchange of ideas on this subject with you after the Londonderry dinner at Holdernesse House on the 19th of June, 1877! . . .

To Lady Bradford.

SOUTH AUDLEY ST., *Nov.* 21.—Hardly a moment to write. These are agitated and agitating times. Nothing was decided yesterday as to meeting of Parliament, but the Cab. meets to-morrow at noon, and will settle it—one way or the other. I think the meeting will take place, as the House of Comm. Ministers are in favor of it, and they bear the strain, and their opinion therefore carries double weight. The army has entered Afghn. at three points this morning. . . .

Nov. 26.—. . . Schou[valoff] has just been here, and had his interview—a long one, and to me satisfactory. I think we shall triumph in all quarters, and not only get our Berlin

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Treaty successfully carried into effect, but that the Ameer is what the Yankees call 'a dead crow'! . . .

Nov. 28.—. . . I cd. not go to the Faery yesterday—to Council—my old enemy being on me. . . . I was obliged to go to the Cab. to-day, but have just returned, quite unable to call in Hill St., or do anything but write to you.

The consequence is that I shall have to go down to Windsor, if possible, again by a spec[ial] train; and on Wednesday I must go to the Council besides, if possible—and Thursday, Parliament! . . . Things look well, but I am not.

Dec. 2.—. . . I fear I never told you, and I only tell it quite in secret, that the Faery wanted Monty to succeed Biddulph, £2,000 *pr. ann.*, and the head place of the Household! What a strange thing had it happened! . . .

To Queen Victoria.

10, Downing St., *Nov.* 27, '78.—. . . *Secret.* To-morrow he understands your Majesty will give audience to Lord Salisbury on the occasion of Count Beust's farewell.

Lord Beaconsfield is entirely satisfied with the conduct of Lord Salisbury; his personal loyalty to himself, his remarkable capacity of labor, and his fertile resource; but Lord Beaconsfield a little fears the cajoling influence of Count Schouvaloff over him. He would, therefore, humbly entreat your Majesty to impress upon the Secretary of State, while appreciating his labors and ability, the absolute necessity and wisdom of the utmost firmness in our relations with Russia. We may be, and ought to be, quite conciliatory in tone, but we must concede nothing. If we are firm and decided, Russia will surrender every point in dispute, present or future dispute. All is going right. Cyprus will be a marvellous success, and Hamley says that Famagusta will turn out a harbor, which will conveniently receive all your Majesty's ironsides. The Sultan is certainly with us, since our announcement of our determination as to Bulgaria and E. Rumelia; and Austria, influenced much by the same cause, every day more inclined to act with us. All that is required is—that England should be conscious of her own strength. . . .

Beaconsfield's language at Guildhall confirmed the Liberal party in its resistance to his Afghan policy. The Ameer left the ultimatum unanswered, and on November 21 the British forces advanced through the passes. The Opposition, once more under the *de facto* leadership of Gladstone, immediately proclaimed that we

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had entered on an 'unjust' war. They adopted eagerly the doctrines of the old Anglo-Indian school, whose spokesman was Lord Lawrence, and who deprecated any intermeddling whatever with the affairs of Afghanistan. They failed to see that the Russian conquest of Turkestan, and the imminent inclusion of Afghanistan within the Russian sphere of influence, had entirely altered the problem; which, ever since Gladstone's refusal of Sher Ali's request for definite support and protection in 1873, had been urgently demanding a fresh solution. This was fully recognised by many of the ablest Anglo-Indians, of whom Sir Bartle Frere and Sir James Stephen were the most powerful voices. But the Liberals shut their eyes to the facts, insisted on regarding the Ameer, who was deep in Russian intrigue, as a would-be friend whom Lytton had treated ill, and vehemently protested that the forcible stoppage of a British Mission after the honorific reception of a Russian Mission was no sufficient ground for a punitive expedition.

Once more, as at the time of the Bulgarian atrocities, it was claimed that a great moral issue was involved; and so much were men's minds inflamed that the chronicler of the *Annual Register* for 1878, whose duty it was to register facts and not to pass judgments, was moved solemnly to record the grave opinion that this was 'a very wanton and a very wicked war,' undertaken in pursuance of a 'deliberately aggressive' policy, and deserving therefore of 'most emphatic condemnation.' These expressions read very foolishly now side by side with the judgment of a man who was as alive as Gladstone to moral issues but who knew the facts. Lord Roberts, after gathering first-hand information on the spot, wrote at Cabul on November 22, 1879: 'Our recent rupture with Shere Ali has, in fact, been the means of unmasking and checking a very serious conspiracy against the peace and security of our Indian Empire.' A modern historian of good judgment, Dr. Holland Rose,[1] who recognises

[1] *The Development of the European Nations*, 5th ed., p. 393.

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that the action of the British Government in the situation existing in 1878 was justifiable, is yet inclined to maintain that that situation would never have existed but for the rejection of the Berlin Memorandum and for Beaconsfield's anti-Russian policy. He writes that 'as far as can be judged from the evidence hitherto published (if we except some wild talk on the part of Muscovite Chauvinists), Russia would not have interfered in Afghanistan except in order to paralyse England's action in Turkish affairs.' Surely he forgets that it was in 1870, six years before the rejection of the Berlin Memorandum, that Russia's intervention in Afghanistan began; when General Kaufmann, the Governor of Turkestan, opened communications with the Ameer, which steadily increased from year to year in frequency and intimacy. The danger existed, and was ever growing, many years before the Eastern Question was reopened in Europe.

In spite of the Liberal outcry, the Afghan policy was successful both in the field and in Parliament. One British division took Ali Musjid and occupied the Khyber Pass as far as Jellalabad; another, under General Roberts, operating by the Kurram Pass, routed the Afghans in a brilliant action at Peiwar Kotal; a third, starting from Quetta, occupied Pishin, and early in January reached Candahar. Parliament met on December 5, while the news of these successes were coming in, and Northcote wrote next day to his wife: 'Roberts's great victory has taken the wind not only out of the sails, but out of the bodies of our opponents. . . . Poor Hartington is in lamentable case, and is reduced to asking my advice as to the best mode of attacking us, without hurting us.' In both Houses Ministers, in spite of some initial anxiety, had large majorities. The Lords supported their action by 201 to 65; the Commons by 328 to 227. The following were Beaconsfield's reports to the Queen:

To Queen Victoria.

10, Downing St., *Dec.* 6, '78.—Lord Beaconsfield with his humble duty to your Majesty, must offer his congratulations

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to his beloved Sovereign, on the signal triumph of your Majesty's arms. The letter of the Ameer, which Lord Beaconsfield underlined some days ago, in a telegram which he forwarded to your Majesty, has just been received by the Secretary of State, and it is clear we may demand any terms we like. Of course, he offers to receive your Majesty's Envoy at Cabul.

The check to Russia, to use a very mild expression, is complete. Lord Beaconsfield has no doubt, that expectations were held out by Russia of military aid to the Ameer.

Lord Beaconsfield has summoned the Cabinet to meet at three o'clock to-day, to consider the Ameer's letter, and the situation generally. The debates proved last night that the Opposition is broken into pieces on the great question of the war. They dare not face it, but take refuge in mere squabbling about sentences in despatches. Lord Beaconsfield closed the debate in the House of Lords to his satisfaction, and is not worse for what was a considerable, tho' not very prolonged, physical exertion. He hopes your Majesty is well on this bright morning, which is as bright as your Majesty's imperial fortunes. . . .

Dec. 7.—. . . The Cabinet decided that Major Cavagnari or some one of his standing should reply to the Ameer, that the terms of the ultimatum must be accepted, but that your Majesty's Government were ready to conclude peace on just conditions. The military operations, in the meanwhile, not to be suspended. He would, and meant to, have written this at length to your Majesty, but was summoned to the House of Lords from the Cabinet, and on arriving at the Houses of Parliament, found everything in agitation and confusion. The legitimate leaders of the Opposition, influenced, at the last moment, by the violent section of their supporters, had suddenly changed their front and had given notice of Votes of Censure on your Majesty's Government, for Monday, in both Houses. The Opposition are sanguine of success in the House of Lords, the members of which are not prepared to give up their shooting parties, and other pursuits popular at this season. The Peers are independent, and cannot be acted upon like the members of the House of Commons thro' their constituencies. Lord Beaconsfield was detained until a late hour in the Lord Chancellor's room, considering the situation, and writing incentive letters to apathetic Peers.

The House of Lords will divide—perhaps even some days before the House of Commons, and the effect, it is feared, of an adverse, or feeble, vote in the Upper Chamber, on the decision of the Lower, may be very injurious. All influences and efforts are necessary. . . .

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Dec. 9.—Lord Beaconsfield . . . will not trouble your Majesty at this moment with business, for he knows your Majesty's heart is disturbed.[1] There is no agitation like that of the affections, and he can truly say, that the thought of your Majesty's suffering haunts him amid all his affairs. He thought on the whole, however, that it might perhaps be a little relief to your Majesty to know that the prospects of your Majesty's Government in the impending struggle seem not unfavorable. He has very good accounts from the House of Commons, and his personal appeals to the House of Lords have brought some unexpectedly favorable results. With all duty and affection.

Dec. 11.—. . . Your Majesty is, of course, aware of the division last night in House of Lords: the greatest majority on record. Dukes of Sutherland and Somerset and Lord Fitzwilliam, and several other Whigs, voted with your Majesty's Government, and others stayed away. Lord Beaconsfield could not write to your Majesty before, as he did not retire last night, or rather this morning, until past four o'clock, having sate in the House of Lords for nearly twelve hours continuously. He is rather shattered, but managed to speak at ½ past 2 o'clock this morning, an exhausted orator, he fears, to a jaded House. However, the deed is done, and the House of Lords has adjourned for a week, until next Tuesday. This division must have a considerable effect on that of the Commons. If good news could come from Darmstadt, he should feel content, but those thoughts prevent his writing more, and perhaps he ought to ask your Majesty's gracious pardon for saying so much. . . .

The speech delivered in these unpromising circumstances was a successful effort which extorted admiration even from hostile critics. Beaconsfield occupied the earlier part of it with an ingenious defence of his Guildhall indiscretion. He repudiated the idea that rectification of frontier necessarily implied annexation or spoliation. It might be managed by an exchange of equivalents. Treaties for rectification of frontiers had been quite common in the recent history of European diplomacy. In any case he never said that the substitution of a scientific for a haphazard frontier was the object, but only a possible consequence, of the war. When he spoke he had in mind the wild ideas then prevalent, that we were about

[1] Owing to Princess Alice's illness.

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to conquer Afghanistan and annex it to our Empire; whereas a scientific rectification would give us all the results we required, and enable us to garrison the frontier with a comparatively small number of men. He quoted Lord Napier of Magdala as a high military authority who confirmed his view.

The sudden appearance of Russia in the immediate vicinity of Afghanistan, said Beaconsfield, had necessarily changed our policy. He held that Russia's military and political preparations in Central Asia against India, at a time when war between Britain and Russia seemed to be impending, were perfectly justifiable. But, now that the crisis was past, the Tsar was prepared to meet our wishes. He had given orders to his troops to retire; and his Ambassador would be merely considered as on a mission of courtesy, and would soon return. Russia's conduct was satisfactory; but after Russian armies had been almost in sight of Afghanistan and a Russian embassy had been within the walls of Cabul, our relations with the Ameer could not remain as they were, and we could not fancy our frontier to be secure. It was said that we ought to have appealed to the Ameer and treated him with courtesy and kindness. That was what we had done. 'Really the Ameer of Afghanistan has been treated like a spoiled child. He has had messages sent to him, he has had messengers offered to him. He has sent messengers to us who have been courteously received. We have written him letters, some of which he has not answered, and others he has answered with unkindness. What more could we do?' Yet the Government were reproached for not fighting Russia rather than the Ameer. 'Remember,' said Beaconsfield, 'Russia has taken every step in this business so as to make honourable amends to England, and her conduct presents the most striking contrast to that furnished by the Ameer.'

Beaconsfield impressed on the House the magnitude and gravity of the issue it had to decide. 'It is not a question of the Khyber Pass merely, and of some small

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cantonments at Dakka or Jellalabad. It is a question which concerns the character and the influence of England in Europe.' He developed this train of thought in his peroration.

What I see in the amendment is not an assertion of great principles, which no man honours more than myself. What is at the bottom of it is rather that principle of peace at any price which a certain party in this country upholds. It is that dangerous dogma which I believe animates the ranks before me at this moment, although many of them may be unconscious of it. That deleterious doctrine haunts the people of this country in every form. Sometimes it is a committee; sometimes it is a letter; sometimes it is an amendment to the Address; sometimes it is a proposition to stop the supplies. That doctrine has done more mischief than any I can well recall that have been afloat in this century. It has occasioned more wars than the most ruthless conquerors. It has disturbed and nearly destroyed that political equilibrium so necessary to the liberties of nations and the welfare of the world. It has dimmed occasionally for a moment even the majesty of England. And, my lords, to-night you have an opportunity, which I trust you will not lose, of branding these opinions, these deleterious dogmas, with the reprobation of the Peers of England.

To Lady Bradford.

[South Audley Street], *Dec.* 15.—This terrible death[1] has thrown us into endless distress and confusion. . . .

The Parliamentary campaign may be said to have ended. It lasted six weeks, and I made three speeches. The first, at Guildhall, put an end to the silly stories about the failure of the Berlin Treaty. The others were the pitched battles in the Lords. I can truly say of all three, *Veni, vidi, vici.*

Beaconsfield's satisfaction with the course of events in Asia seemed, during the early months of 1879, to be justified. No further military operations against the Afghans were found to be necessary. Sher Ali fled to Russian Turkestan; his appeals for help to those with whom he had intrigued, though they met with sympathy from some local representatives of Russia, were disregarded by the Tsar; and he died in exile before the close of February, 1879. Yakub Khan, his son, who had been

[1] Princess Alice.

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long kept in prison by his father, at once made overtures to the Indian Government. Both Lytton and the Cabinet at home thought that they had found in Yakub a man who would have the power to rule the Afghans, and the will to rule in friendship with British India. By a treaty concluded at Gandamak near Jellalabad on May 26 the Ameer accepted British control of his foreign policy and consented to receive a British Resident at Cabul, obtaining in return a promise of support against foreign aggression. He recovered Candahar and Jellalabad; but he ceded the frontier districts of Kurram, Pishin, and Sibi, the British Government also retaining control over the Khyber and Michnee Passes, which had never acknowledged Afghan rule. Thus apparently all that Beaconsfield and Lytton desired was cheaply secured; a scientific frontier giving command of the passes, and the guidance of Afghan policy though a resident agent. *Dis aliter visum.*

To return to December, 1878.—Again public affairs kept Beaconsfield hard at work during the holiday season; and again he ate a solitary Christmas dinner at Hughenden.

To Lady Bradford.

S[OUTH] A[UDLEY] ST., *Dec.* 20, '78.—Yesterday was a day of terrible pressure. A sudden Cabinet at ½ pt. 11—a Golden Casket Deputation at one, and then, after seeing many colleagues, an early audience at Windsor—*i.e.*, six o'ck. So I could not write to you, wh. annoyed me.

And all this with a most oppressive attack of my great enemy, wh. quite disqualified me for a royal audience, during wh., strictly, I believe you may not even blow your nose! Nothing cd. be worse than going to Windsor, but it was inevitable and put off till the last moment.

We arrived in London this morning in a black fog, and I found alarming letters on my table, preparing me for the failure of banks, 'another black Friday,' and begging me to telegraph to the Cr. of Exchequer, who, I believe, left London last night, that it may be necessary to suspend the Bank Charter! A pleasant Xmas! and my birthday to-morrow! And to-morrow Monty goes to Melbury! . . .

I had a long audience—more than an hour. . . .

I have kept this open, and wd. have wished to write more,

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but am busied, harassed, and ill. London is as black as night. I am ordered out of town to-morrow, and shd. have gone some days ago, but this Windsor visit hung over me. . . .

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Dec.* 22.—I got down here yesterday —a white world. . . .

I forgot to tell you I met Manning, after ten years' and more non-acquaintance. He called on me the day before yesterday, and sate with me a long time. He is a fervent supporter ! ! !

Xmas Day.—. . . It is not my throat that ails, it is my breast; and one always feels, with complaints of this kind, that we are in dangerous vicinage of the lungs. Hitherto I have escaped in that department, but my present attack is a severe one, and out of door life is almost impossible. . . .

The snow is falling fast and thick on a crust of ½ a doz. inches. There only want snowballs to recall one's youth.

I have two secretaries in London. Mr. Turnor, my hunting secretary, is frostbound. He has seven hunters ! Private secretaries are different from what they were in my days, when I was Lord Lyndhurst's, and hunted in Vale of Aylesbury on one horse ! at the hazard of my life ! I cd. afford no more. Exactly thirty years afterwards, when Lord Lonsdale was leaving the field, but did not like breaking up his stable at Tring, he offered me the complete control and enjoyment of his stud there—as long as I liked. But it was too late. Everything, they say, comes too late. It is something if it comes. However, I can't complain of life. I have had a good innings, and cannot at all agree with the great King that all is vanity.

Dec. 27.—. . . I have now been here a week to-morrow, and have not spoken to anyone. I woke this morning to a green world, and went out on the terrace: this is my third time. I think the change of weather must bring me relief, but it has not come yet. I found the peacocks all mounted on the marble vases (with their tails reaching to the earth), wh. vases are now, of course, emptied of flowers. There were not vases enough for them, so the rest had flown up to the pergola, and one or two were looking into the windows of yr. rooms, and seemed much disappointed at not finding you. I was not so disappointed, but, I am sure, more sorry. . . .

You are right in supposing that the business, wh. now takes up so much of my time, is the general distress; but it is one most difficult to deal with. There are so many plans, so many schemes, and so many reasons why there shd. be neither plans nor schemes.

What I fear is that the Opposition, who will stick at nothing, may take up the theme for party purposes. If we then don't support them, we shall be stigmatised as unpatriotic: if we do, they will carry all the glory.

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And yet—what is the cause of the distress? And, if permanent, is there to be a permanent Committee of Relief? And the property of the nation to support the numbers of unemployed labor? Worse than socialism.

To hoist the flag of distress, when there has been no visible calamity to account for it, like a cotton famine, no bread and meat famine, no convulsion of nature, is difficult and may not be wise.

There are 1,000 other things to be said (on both sides)—but after all starvation has no answer. You will see, however, how difficult is my present position with constant correspondence (and no Secs.) of equal and contradictory character—impossibility of calling a Cabinet, for that, at Xmas, wd. frighten the world—and everybody agreeing with nobody, but throwing the respon[sibilit]y on my shoulders. . . .

To Anne Lady Chesterfield.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Dec.* 26, '78.—I must thank you for my Xmas dinner, tho' I have only a moment. . . .

The Parliamentary campaign was brilliant and triumphant. Why the Opposition insisted upon one, I can only account for by the want of judgment which distinguishes human nature: still, in my own case, it will not do to make speeches on bronchitis.

Dec. 30.—. . . [Lord Grey de Wilton] is insipid. Somebody offered him £50 for the original of the Bath letter,[1] wh. I wrote to him from Weston. He stared, but said he had not kept it. He was worthy of the most famous state-paper of modern times, and wh. destroyed a Ministry. . . .

[1] See Vol. V., p. 262.

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CHAPTER XI.

THE ZULU WAR.

1879.

The year 1879 was marked by British disasters in two continents, which contributed materially to the downfall of Beaconsfield's Government. But it opened well. On New Year's Day Sher Ali was in precipitate flight, and the British armies were completely successful in their advance on Afghanistan. It was known that trouble was brewing in South Africa, but few believed it to be serious; and the one dark patch, in the picture that Beaconsfield painted for the Queen, was the domestic distress, which his optimism regarded as transient.

To Queen Victoria.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *New Year's Day*, 1879.—Lord Beaconsfield with his humble duty to yr. Majesty. He had not heart enough to congratulate yr. Majesty at Xmas, and why does he do it now? when only a few days have elapsed since that season left us in sorrow. Because, tho' it seems somewhat irrational that an artificial arrangement of time should affect our feelings, yet it is so. A new year is a new departure in life; and Hope, rather than Care, is its harbinger.

Indeed, if yr. Majesty would, or could, for a moment throw a veil over the anguish of private sorrow, there is much in yr. Majesty's state that may be looked upon with more than content. The authority of yr. Majesty's throne stands high again in Europe. Yr. Majesty's counsellors have taken a leading, and successful, part in the most important diplomatic meeting since the Congress of Vienna, and yr. Majesty's arms have achieved, in Asia, a brilliant and enduring success.

One public care remains, no doubt, in the great industrial distress, which, in common with all countries, has fallen on yr. Majesty's kingdom, but it is not in the nature of things that

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it should long endure, tho' its progress requires the utmost vigilance and judgment.

Lord Beaconsfield, with all his good wishes for yr. Majesty's happiness, both public and private, cannot refrain, on such an occasion, from expressing his own gratitude to yr. Majesty for the condescending and unshaken kindness, which yr. Majesty has ever extended to him; lightening, as it does, every care, and lending a charm to labor.

From Queen Victoria.

OSBORNE, *Jan.* 1, 1879.—Tho' the Queen has telegraphed her New Year's wishes to Lord Beaconsfield she desires to repeat them, earnestly hoping that he may see many more, and also to thank him for his *very* kind letter. The Queen wishes to thank Lord Beaconsfield for all his kindness to her, and for the great services he has rendered to the country. May he long continue to guide its destinies! The prospects—as regards foreign affairs, our position in the world, our successes in India and our general policy at home—are very cheering. The distress is, of course, a cause of great concern and of a certain amount of anxiety—but she trusts that that will soon improve. . . .

Beaconsfield's own health was far from satisfactory, and his New Year letter to Lady Bradford was couched in a more despondent tone than that to the Queen.

To Lady Bradford.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Jan.* 1, 1879.—. . . You talk, in yr. last, of a 'tendency to bronchitis'! Alas! it is not a tendency; it is bronchitis absolute, and in its most aggravated form. Nothing else wd. have prevented my going to Weston. It began in town: more or less, I had it all the last month. I see people die of it every day. I don't see why I don't. Nobody can do me any good. I have tried 'all schools of thought,' as they say. . . .

My present physicians are Dr. Solitude, Dr. Silence, Dr. Warmth, and two general practitioners, Regular Hours, and Regular Meals. I mention this, that you shd. not think I was neglected. I don't want any companion, unless it were you.

The Prime Minister was well enough to preside over the usual Cabinets held to prepare the programme of the session. His interest, however, this month was largely

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taken up by two appointments: that of the Whig Lord Dufferin as Ambassador to St. Petersburg, where the presence of a first-rate man was essential, and that of Lightfoot to the bishopric of Durham. The Queen, though she herself suggested Lightfoot as a suitable addition to the episcopacy, would have preferred to fill the See of Durham by the translation of Magee.

To Queen Victoria.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Jan.* 17, 1879.—No one can deny, and Lord Beaconsfield does not wish to deny, the abilities of the Bishop of Peterboro,' but no party has any confidence in him; his judgment cannot be relied on, he is vehement in opposite directions; and above all, he is wanting in dignity of manner and mind. Lord Beaconsfield is quite satisfied about Dr. Lightfoot, but he doubts, whether he has the personal gifts, particularly as to preaching and public speaking, which are necessary for Durham. . . .

10, DOWNING STREET, *Jan.* 27, 1879.—. . . Yr. Majesty's appointment of Canon Lightfoot to the see of Durham will add lustre to yr. Majesty's reign. The University of Durham, under his guidance, will exercise great influence on the ecclesiastical future, and on the formation of the religious mind of the rising generation. It is of great importance, to yr. Majesty's Government, that some mark of respect and recognition should now be shown to that powerful party of the Anglican Church, which Lord Beaconsfield would describe as the 'right centre': those, who, tho' High Churchmen, firmly resist, or hitherto have resisted, the deleterious designs of Canon Lyddon, and the Dean of St. Paul's,[1] who wish to terminate the connection between the Crown and the Church, and ultimately, unite with the Greek Church. The Church Union is entirely under their control, and now, at every election, that Union systematically votes against yr. Majesty's Government, on the main ground, among others, that Lord Beaconsfield virtually carried the Public Worship Act. No effort should be spared in preventing the orthodox and loyal High Church party being absorbed by these dangerous malcontents, who would support any candidate, even Bradlaugh, against yr. Majesty's Government. For this reason Lord Beaconsfield much wishes, that yr. Majesty should confer the vacant Canonry of St. Paul's on Professor Stubbs,[2] Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford, a man of European reputation.

[1] Church. [2] Afterwards Bishop of Oxford.

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From Prince Gortchakoff.

Confidential. ST. PETERSBURG, *Jan.* 30 (*Feb.* 11), 1879.—I have received your lordship's letter of February 6. Your friend, Lord Dufferin, will be welcome. I shall be the more happy to see him as he is entrusted by your lordship to communicate me all your efforts for the maintenance of peace and the foundations of a sincerely good understanding between our two Empires. The achievement would be worthy of your superior intelligence.

For my part, I entertain entire confidence in the words we exchanged at Berlin. But I must candidly avow that the conduct of the majority of your agents abroad does not confirm our mutual hopes.

I am sure you will not grudge me for this frankness—frankness is the highest proof of esteem—and that you allow me this appeal to your personal power and loyalty.

To Lady Bradford.

10, DOWNING STREET, *J*[*an*]. 24, '79.—It is difficult to write: even the Faery is forgotten. But Cabinets—and languor, every day, and interviews—unceasing—afterwards, exhaust and at last almost confuse me. I came up with great care; in an express train, and in a small saloon carriage, which had been warming for me at Wycombe for a week, and I have never left this house for a minute, and yet the enemy has caught me. Dr. Kidd comes to me to-morrow morning, and I hope we may arrest it, but I have no great hopes till this savage weather changes.

All the world, I hear, is skating. I do not hear of any human being of the civilised order being in town. . . .

Jan. 27.—. . . I am suffering, and a prisoner now of ten days, but still I have held five Cabinets in a week, wh. no P. Minister ever did before.

Jan. 29.—. . . I have just had a visit from the new Bishop. I was prepared for a very ill-looking man; I was told by the Faery, the most ill-looking man she knew. He is ugly, but his ugliness is not hideous; a good expression in short, wh. is enough in a man. . . .

Feb. 6.—. . . This change to Favonian breezes is a great relief and delight. I have been here three weeks next Saturday, and only went out for the first time this early morn—and not alone. I am very tired, but still it is a first step out of quarantine, and later in the day I go to Hatfield for a change of air and scene, and shall remain there till Parliament. . . .

I hope Dufferin's appointment to St. Petersburg will produce

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From the signed photograph presented by Prince Gortchakoff to the Earl of Beaconsfield at the Berlin Congress.

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results. I wanted a first-rate man there. I conclude the Whigs will be sulky about it; that can't be helped. . . .

HATFIELD HOUSE, *Feb. some day or other* [? *Feb.* 8].—I offered myself here when the wind changed, but [they] did not tell me their house was full. I met, among others, Lady Cornelia Guest, whose letter, written in the heat of the British election, I had never answered! and Janetta.[1] . . . The crowd is very miscellaneous—Lady Marian and the Harcourts, and Schou., and the Cranbrooks . . . and *Pinafore* Smith[2] and his wife and daughter . . . and Count Piper, and Ct. Montebello, and a good many others. Our hostess is admirable from her unflagging energy and resource, and the daughters of the house are always delightful, from their extreme intelligence and natural manners; but it requires all their gifts to carry the thing through, but they succeed.

To-day, they had the meet here, and, with a Favonian breeze and frequent gleams of sunshine, the scene was bright with scarlet coats and the promise of ½ a doz. foxes in the Park—but alas! not one was found there; but the *chasseurs* have not returned, and, it is to be hoped, have been more fortunate in more distant regions.

I shd. have remained here till Tuesday, but have a Cabinet on Monday, and, of course, will not return. After two months of imprisonment, the bland atmosphere must be beneficial.

Monty is here, and seems in high force—with endless tennis, in courts, or lawns, and in the evening singing, dancing—a new Swedish dance quite excellent wh. you shd. see and learn, and introduced by Count Piper, who is the Swedish Minister. At ½ pt. 11—with great difficulty, much preparation, and seizing the select opportunity—I manage to escape, but no one else does, and I am told, before they disperse, the small hours sound; in short, quite orgies!

Parliament was to meet on Thursday the 13th, and Beaconsfield came to town on the Monday to make final preparations for what appeared likely to be a quiet session. Next day all his hopes were shattered by the news of the disaster at Isandhlwana to part of the British force invading Zululand under Lord Chelmsford's command. Eight hundred white soldiers and nearly five hundred natives had been surprised by the enemy, and cut off to a man. The tidings fell like a thunderbolt on the unprepared

[1] Lady John Manners.
[2] W. H. Smith, First Lord of the Admiralty.

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British public, and produced a shock and disturbance unmatched since the Indian Mutiny.

Hitherto no large amount of public attention had been attracted to the Colonial policy of the Government. Disraeli had originally selected as Secretary of State for the Colonies the one man among the Conservative leaders who had made a continuous study of Colonial problems; whose views, moreover, corresponded with that consolidating and unifying policy which he himself had propounded at the Crystal Palace in 1872. Carnarvon had signalised his first tenure of the seals of the Colonial Office in 1866–67 by carrying through the great Act for the confederation of Canada. On returning to Downing Street, he embraced with eagerness the view of his Liberal predecessor in the office, Kimberley, that South Africa, owing to the native peril, was ripe for a similar measure; and he was encouraged to proceed by his chief as well as by a large body of opinion, both Dutch and English, on the spot. Subsequent history has shown that the policy was in itself a right one for a large country with a comparatively small and scattered white population, divided into several colonies, states, and territories, and surrounded and interpenetrated by a vast mass of natives, many of them imbued with the fighting spirit. But reconsideration of the conditions of 1874 certainly suggests that the policy was then premature, if only because two of the principal states, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, were at that date recognised by the British Government as independent. It would be only with the utmost reluctance, and owing to the pressure of hard necessity, that the Boers who had gone out of the British Empire to found these states would come again within it. But if they remained independent, South African federation, being confined to British territories, would be a very imperfect instrument of government; unless, indeed, it was contemplated to make a new departure and embrace in the Confederation, not only countries which acknowledged allegiance to the British Crown, but also

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countries which repudiated such allegiance. Such a hybrid experiment, it may be confidently asserted, could not have been permanently workable.

Whatever Carnarvon's expectations may have been, the first measures which he took to promote his policy were hardly judicious. It was only a few years since the Cape Colony had been granted responsible government, and it was naturally tenacious of its privileges. But Carnarvon, in a despatch to Sir Henry Barkly, the Governor, not merely deprived it of the initiative by himself suggesting a conference on the spot to discuss federation, but actually named the persons in his opinion best fitted to represent the constituent States. The Colony took umbrage, which the Governor felt to be justified; and a resolution was carried in the Assembly that any movement in the direction of federation should originate in South Africa and not in England. Besides offending a considerable section of South African feeling by this despatch, Carnarvon also made unhappy use of a diplomatic weapon of which his chief was too fond, the semi-official mission of a personal friend. In this case the friend was J. A. Froude, the historian, who was a master of English prose, but who was singularly lacking in practical political insight. He made two tours in South Africa, in successive years (1874 and 1875), as in some sort Carnarvon's personal representative. He returned from the first tour with much more sympathy for the Dutch than for the British point of view in South Africa. Nevertheless Carnarvon sent him back as one of his nominated members of the proposed federation conference. Though the resolution of the Cape Assembly had killed the conference before he arrived for the second time, Froude was ill-advised enough to carry on a campaign in the Cape Colony and the Orange Free State on behalf of his friend's policy; and Carnarvon failed to realise the impropriety of this defiance of the responsible authorities at Capetown.

The Froude mission produced a very different impression upon Disraeli. His frequent recurrence to the

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blunder in his private letters shows that it seriously shook his confidence in Carnarvon's judgment. Carnarvon himself discovered before long that Froude's picture of an enthusiastic and unanimous South Africa backing the Minister in Downing Street against the responsible Government in Capetown was a work of imagination. He dropped his original proposal, substituting for it an invitation to a conference in London; which, however, attracted only a limited attendance and did not materially advance federation.

In other respects Carnarvon's administration in these early years reflected credit on the Minister and the Government, and frequently elicited the commendation of his chief. He carried through the annexation of the Fiji Islands, the sovereignty over which had been offered to Great Britain over and over again by native kings and white settlers during more than twenty years. He was responsible also for an extension of our dominion in the Malay Peninsula, whereby Perak was pacified and the foundation laid for our protectorate of the neighbouring Malay States; though the principal credit here is due to the Governor of the Straits Settlements, Sir William Jervois, whose vigorous campaign in Perak was looked upon coldly both by Carnarvon and by Disraeli until it was successful. On the West Coast of Africa, Carnarvon began his administration happily by the stamping out of the slave trade and the emancipation of the slaves in British Colonies. On the other hand, he failed in an attempt to make an exchange of territory in that region with France, involving the cession of our isolated Colony of Gambia. The project was finally upset by the protests of the Gambia traders; and Disraeli did not consider that the negotiation, which was protracted over many months, was well managed.

But South Africa was Carnarvon's chief preoccupation throughout his ministry, and he was able to contribute in many ways to the improvement of a tangled situation. For Natal the native question was always acute, and,

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after Langalibalele's rebellion in 1874, Carnarvon sent out Wolseley as Special Commissioner, who was able to establish a better and more humane policy. Then the discovery of diamonds north of the Orange River, in Griqualand West, in land claimed both by Cape Colony and by the Orange Free State, produced a serious dispute with one of the independent Dutch States, which was happily settled by Carnarvon in July, 1876, by the payment to the Free State of £90,000 in consideration of the abandonment of their claim. But it was the condition of the other Dutch State, the Transvaal Republic, and its relation with its native neighbours, which presented the most difficult problem for Carnarvon's solution. The Transvaal, of course, was at that time, some years before the discovery of the Rand goldfield, an almost purely pastoral State, with a scattered population of *voor-trekkers*, who had left British territory and gone north into the wilderness, in order to escape the restraints of British rule and to preserve their absolute independence. That independence had been definitely recognised by the Sand River Convention of 1852; but the Dutch farmers, sprinkled at wide intervals over the high veld, had failed to establish an organised or cohesive or self-supporting State. The internal anarchy of the Republic was a scandal throughout South Africa; and externally it was constantly threatening, and generally fighting, some one or other of its coloured neighbours, who detested the Boers for their uniformly harsh treatment of natives. Khama and Lobengula in the north implored the protection of the Queen against Boer aggression; Cetywayo, the king of the great fighting tribe of Zulus, was only restrained from attacking his hereditary enemies by the British authorities in Natal; while in the summer of 1876 war broke out between the Transvaal and a native chief called Sikukuni, whose location was near Lydenburg. The Boers suffered defeats, but the fighting dragged on and was exasperated through the employment by the Republic of bands of filibustering scoundrels.

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The whole native population of South Africa became dangerously excited, and there was in the minds of those who knew the situation best, such as Barkly, the Governor of the Cape, and Shepstone, Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal, a serious fear of a general Kaffir war. Carnarvon shared this fear, and at the same time saw, as he thought, a real opportunity of pushing forward, in spite of recent rebuffs, his great panacea of federation. 'My hope,' he wrote to Beaconsfield on September 15, 'is that by acting at once, we may prevent war and acquire at a stroke the whole of the Transvaal Republic, after which the Orange Free State will follow, and the whole policy in South Africa, for which we have been labouring, [will be] fully and completely justified.' He developed his policy in a couple of letters during the next few weeks.

From Lord Carnarvon.

Private and very Confidl. COL. OFFICE, *Sept.* 20, '76.—Matters at the Cape are extremely critical, but they are up to my last advices going as I desire. But they need very prompt handling, and the loss of a mail now may be irretrievable.

The Dutch army is apparently *in extremis*, and I have received information that a meeting has already been called by a certain part of the people to ask for our intervention and to take over the Govt. of the country. Some even of the Dutch authorities appear to be consenting parties.

It is on every ground of the highest importance not to lose this opportunity, and I propose to send out by the mail of Friday Sir Theoph. Shepstone—the man who has the most intimate knowledge of S. African affairs and the greatest influence alike over natives and Dutch—with a secret despatch empowering him to take over the Transvaal Govt. and country, and to become the first English Governor—if circumstances on his arrival render this in any way possible. Should any now unforeseen change have occurred—as unfortunately is possible, though I hope not likely—he will hold his hand, and I shall try to give him instructions suitable to the case. But I have every confidence in his judgment and capacity and courage; and, knowing my mind, he will under almost any circumstances I believe act rightly.

Will you send me back by the messenger a few lines to convey your concurrence in what may seem a sudden, but is

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not a hasty or ill-considered measure? There is every reason for it both on the ground of policy and in order to prevent a great S. African war which—if there is any want of decision at home or on the spot—will be the consequence. . . .

Private. HIGHCLERE CASTLE, NEWBURY, *Oct.* 15, '76.—The progress of events in S. Africa seems to bring a possible annexation of the Transvaal Republic and the consequent confederation of the various colonies and states within sight. Much, however, will depend upon every preparation being now made to enable us to take advantage of the feeling of the time.

Under these circumstances I am preparing a *permissive* Bill to allow these colonies and states to confederate. My next step must be, without loss of time, to bring S. African opinion to bear upon it in such a way as to secure some criticism and expression of feeling on it. If this is, as I hope, favourable, there will be no difficulty in passing the measure through Parliament,[1] but, owing to the length of time required for communicating with the Cape and to the critical state of affairs there, I do not like to delay my movements for the meeting and discussion of the matter in Cabinet. Though the Bill will not be immediately ready it seems to me desirable to give an intimation of my intentions at once: and every day is of value.

If, therefore, you concur in this general line, which I believe is safe and expedient, I will act as I have described.

It is clear from these letters that Carnarvon's policy was the annexation of the Transvaal, that he expected and hoped that Shepstone would find no other course possible; not, as has been sometimes represented, that he hoped to avoid it and gave Shepstone authority to annex only in the last resort. He had realised by this time that the existence in South Africa of two states not owing fealty to the British Crown was an almost insuperable obstacle to federation. He saw his way to bringing one of them immediately within the Empire, and believed that the other would necessarily follow. Beaconsfield, though a strong believer in federation for South Africa, appears to have had his doubts of this very forward policy; but his mind in this autumn of 1876 was occupied with the Eastern Question, and he deferred,

[1] The Bill was passed in the session of 1877, after being seriously obstructed in the House of Commons by the Parnellites.

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as he seems to have done throughout Carnarvon's tenure of the Colonial Office, to his colleague's expert knowledge, and accepted, with whatever hesitation, his proposals. On April 6, 1877, he wrote to him: 'I approve of the Permissive Bill; indeed, I don't see we have any other course to take. . . . Paul Kruger is an ugly customer.' Subsequently in the House of Lords Beaconsfield defended the annexation as 'a geographical necessity.'

Shepstone spent eleven weeks in Pretoria in investigation of the problem on the spot before he acted. He found the Republic bankrupt, trade at a standstill, the white men split into factions, Sikukuni threatening one frontier and the Zulus massed, ready to attack, on another. The President and the Volksraad had no suggestion to make other than vague schemes of Constitutional reform. Annexation seemed to him to be the only adequate cure for the evils of the State; and it was accordingly publicly proclaimed on April 12, 1877. There was no suggestion of force; Shepstone, whose coming to the Transvaal had been welcomed by the residents, had with him only a staff of seven or eight officers, and an escort of 25 Natal Mounted Police; to all appearance public opinion acquiesced, if it did not rejoice, in the change. But the assent of the Volksraad was not sought; the President made a formal protest, retiring to the Cape on a pension; and the Executive Council sent Vice-President Kruger and another ex-official to England to plead, on behalf of the recalcitrant back-veld Boers, for a reversal of Shepstone's act. Carnarvon, while of course maintaining the annexation, promised that the wishes and interests of the Dutch population should be fully consulted; which was a repetition and endorsement of pledges given by Shepstone himself. In spite of these promises, however, no Constitution was granted for two years and a half; and then the Boers, whose discontent had been steadily increasing, and who naturally desired responsible government through their Volksraad, were

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put off with Crown Colony administration. Shepstone clearly had not the same insight into the Dutch mind and character as he had into the native. It is impossible not to blame both the Government at home[1] and their agents on the spot for this unnecessary delay and this insensibility to the needs of the situation. Had a free Constitution as well as material advantage immediately followed annexation, the Boers might perhaps have settled down quietly under British rule, and some of the darkest pages in recent South African history might never have been written.

Carnarvon accompanied the despatch of the Shepstone mission by another decisive move in the direction of South African federation and of a forward policy to secure it. He prevailed on Sir Bartle Frere, one of the foremost Anglo-Indian administrators of the day, a man of the highest character and ability, to accept the Governorship of Cape Colony and the High Commissionership for South Africa. He selected him as 'the statesman who seems to me most capable of carrying my scheme of confederation into effect'; and, assuming that the work of union would not take more than two years, he expressed the hope that Frere would stay on for a year or two after union 'to bring the new machine into working order, as the first Governor-General of the South African Dominion.' It was a task thoroughly calculated to appeal to the patriotic ambitions of a great Proconsul, one of the leading apologists of a forward policy on the north-west frontier of India, a man exceptionally self-reliant, accustomed by his official experience to take serious decisions without direction from Downing Street. No better choice could have been made if Ministers at home had determined on a forward policy in South Africa, and were prepared for the risks involved. But there can be little doubt that the main desire of the Cabinet, and especially of the Prime Minister, was, in view of the reopening of the Eastern

[1] It should, of course, be remembered that Carnarvon only remained in the Government for nine months after the annexation.

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Question in Europe and Asia, to keep things as quiet as possible in South Africa. They accepted the policy of confederation as being, what it ultimately was, a policy of peace; they shut their eyes to the probability that, in existing conditions, the desired end could hardly be attained without war.

Frere reached the Cape almost simultaneously with Shepstone's hoisting of the British flag at Pretoria; and he was confronted immediately by a South Africa whose conditions were materially affected by that historic act. In particular, the general Kaffir war, to avert which was one of Carnarvon's reasons for annexation, appeared to be more imminent than ever. There was no longer a balance of power in which the English held the scales between the Dutch and the natives. Where there had been two white Governments, there was now but one; as the Free State might be expected to follow the Transvaal, and in any case it constituted an enclave which hardly affected general policy. Roughly speaking, the English power confronted the native face to face throughout the land. The warlike Zulus, in particular, who had a blood-feud, handed down from father to son, with the Boers, but who were friendly with the English, found there was now no opening for that 'washing of their spears' for which they lusted. Cetywayo, their king, 'could no longer go to war in any direction without coming into collision with the English or those whom the English protected. In his mind there grew up the idea that he was being surrounded like a wild beast in its lair, and like a wild beast he prepared for his last fight.'[1] Frere was prevented from dealing with the Zulu danger for several months owing to Kaffir wars with Gaikas and Galekas in the Transkei on the eastern frontier of Cape Colony. When he had brought these to a satisfactory conclusion and was able to turn his attention to Cetywayo, Carnarvon had resigned and there was seated at the Colo-

[1] Sir Charles Lucas's *Historical Geography of the British Colonies, South and East Africa*, Part I., ch. 8.

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nial Office Hicks Beach, who had no special knowledge of South Africa or enthusiasm for his predecessor's ideals, but who was impressed by the importance of the Eastern crisis, and was especially anxious to avoid military complications in other quarters of the world.

Frere, on the other hand, brought away from his experience of the Gaika and Galeka wars the conviction that there was spreading throughout South African Kaffirdom a spirit of general revolt against white civilisation; and that the natives everywhere were looking to the Zulus, as the strongest race, to try conclusions with the white men. When he came to study the Zulu question on the spot in September, 1878, he formed the conclusion that Natal had been living on a volcano for years, and he was profoundly astonished at the insensibility of the colonists to their peril. It seemed to him that there could be no peace and safety in South Africa, and especially in Natal, until Cetywayo's power was broken. It was likely that the Zulus, who had already violated the frontier and committed isolated acts of defiance and outrage, would themselves open war upon the white men. But, if they refrained, Frere resolved to force the issue, terminate a paralysing condition of suspense and dread, and bring on at once a struggle which he was convinced could not be postponed for long. 'It is generally bad diplomacy,' writes a still greater Empire-builder, Cromer, 'to force on a conflict even when it seems inevitable.'[1]

Beaconsfield began to get uneasy about the state of affairs in South Africa just at the time when the Eastern Question was in a crucial stage. The Kaffir wars of 1877 and 1878 were not at all the result he expected from Carnarvon's policy of confederation.

Montagu Corry to Sir Henry Ponsonby.

Confidential. 10, Downing St., *May* 13, '78.—. . . Ld. B. is extremely dissatisfied with all that has taken, or is taking, place at the Cape. The troubles commenced by Lord Carnarvon, who, he says, lived mainly in a coterie of editors of

[1] *Abbas II.*, p. 17.

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Liberal papers who praised him and drank his claret, sending Mr. Froude—a desultory and theoretical *littérateur* who wrote more rot on the reign of Elizabeth than Gibbon required for all the *Decline and Fall*—to reform the Cape, which ended naturally in a Kaffir War. . . .

Then Shepstone's failure to appease the Transvaal further alarmed Beaconsfield in the autumn. Lanyon was sent from Griqualand West to take Shepstone's place. It was no more convenient to have complications in South Africa while trouble was brewing in India than when the Eastern Question was acute.

To Lady Bradford.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 27, 1878.—. . . I am not in a state of consternation about Afgh[anista]n, and if anything annoys me more than another, it is our Cape affairs, where every day brings forward a new blunder of Twitters.[1]

The man he swore by was Sir T. Shepstone, whom he looked upon as heaven-born for the object in view. We sent him out entirely for Twitters' sake, and he has managed to quarrel with Eng., Dutch, and Zulus; and now he is obliged to be recalled, but not before he has brought on, I fear, a new war. Froude was bad enough, and has cost us a million; this will be worse. . . .

Soon there came strong appeals from Chelmsford, the General in command in Natal, backed by Frere, for reinforcements. Beach was reluctantly disposed to agree; but Beaconsfield, in view of our other commitments, demurred to any action which might encourage war in South Africa; and the Cabinet decided to send out the 'special service' officers asked for, but no more troops for the present. Beach, in writing to Frere, expressed 'a confident hope that by the exercise of prudence, and by meeting the Zulus in a spirit of forbearance and reasonable compromise, it will be possible to avert the very serious evil of a war with Cetywayo.' This was in the middle of October, but at the beginning of November further urgent demands for troops made reconsideration inevitable. Beach, and the Cabinet with him, were by

[1] Lord Carnarvon.

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no means satisfied that a Zulu war was necessary; or that, if one should break out, a sufficient force, out of the 6,000 troops in South Africa, could not be concentrated in Natal to bring it to a successful termination. 'I have impressed this view,' wrote Beach to Beaconsfield on November 3, 'upon Sir B. Frere, both officially and privately, to the best of my power. But I cannot really control him without a telegraph.[1] (I don't know that I could, with one.) I feel it is as likely as not that he is at war with the Zulus at the present moment; and if his forces should prove inadequate, or the Transvaal Boers should take the opportunity to rise, he will be in a great difficulty, and we shall be blamed for not suppporting him.' These last considerations prevailed over the Cabinet's reluctance to encourage their agent's forward policy, and the reinforcements were sent before the end of November, with the instruction, however, that they were only to be used for defensive purposes.

Frere seems to have been taken aback by the hesitation of the Cabinet to send reinforcements and by their evident anxiety to avoid war. He had frequently, in his letters to the Imperial Government, expressed in general terms his view that Great Britain should be the sole sovereign, on both South African coasts, up to the Portuguese frontiers, and that she should not evade the clear responsibilities of sovereignty, but make the native tribes realise that she was master. As this view had not been controverted from home, he appears to have conceived that he had a right to claim Cabinet support for the detailed measures, including a declaration of war, which were necessary, in his judgment, for carrying it out. The present exhortations of the Cabinet to moderation came, he considered, too late; he had, in reliance on their acceptance of his policy, committed himself too far, and the peril to white men in South Africa was too imminent, for any hesitation now. And yet there

[1] At that time there was no cable to South Africa, and telegrams were brought to Capetown by steamer from the Cape Verde Islands. Accordingly telegrams then took between two and three weeks, letters between three and four weeks, in transmission.

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seem to have been some of the elements of a possible compromise. Cetywayo had consented to accept arbitration on the vexed question of the boundary between Zululand and the Transvaal, and a Commission appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor of Natal had reported that most of the disputed territory belonged rightfully to the Zulus. Frere, as High Commissioner, had to make the award. He thought that the report was too partial to the Zulus, but that nevertheless, in spite of the disgust which its acceptance would cause the Boers, it must in the main be accepted.

With a communication of this agreeable kind to make, it ought, one would think, to have been possible for Frere to come to an arrangement with the Zulus which would comply with his instructions from home and, while securing the Colony from immediate danger, postpone, in deference to imperial difficulties in other continents, a South African war. He saw his duty differently, and he may have been right. He disregarded the instructions which had been in his hands for some weeks, and, without reference to the Home Government, delivered on December 11, along with the award, an ultimatum which he felt sure Cetywayo would not accept and which would therefore involve immediate hostilities. He required the king, as was obviously proper, to make good, by fine or surrender, the outrages which his people had committed; but he went farther and demanded that he should abolish the military system of a celibate soldiery which made the Zulus a terror to their neighbours, that he should receive back and protect the missionaries whom he had expelled, and that he should agree to the appointment of a permanent British Resident in his country. No answer was returned within the stipulated time, and early in January, 1879, the war began.[1] Frere was apparently satisfied that Chelmsford had sufficient force, and that success would be speedy and complete. Beach also was sanguine.

[1] For Frere's own view, see Martineau's *Life of Sir Bartle Frere*, Vol. II.

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From Sir Michael Hicks Beach.

WILLIAMSTRIP PARK, FAIRFORD, *Jan.* 13, '79.—. . . There is, I hope, a good prospect . . . of the war being short and successful, like the Afghan campaign. The reinforcements would arrive just about in time to take part in it; Frere and Thesiger[1] seemed, from the last letters I have received, very confident, though these letters were written at a time when they thought no reinforcements were coming; the Zulus are reported to be much divided in opinion, likely to be rendered more so by some of the demands which Frere has made, so that Cetywayo's position may be very similar to that of Shere Ali; and the Boers, who might place us in a very difficult situation by rising in the Transvaal while we are engaged with the Zulus, are said to be perfectly passive, according to their nature, waiting to see what will turn up. When the Zulus have submitted or are beaten, the Boers will be afraid to move—and Carnarvon's acquisition should then settle down under our rule in a way which has not, as yet, seemed probable since we took it.

So that, on the whole, though Frere's policy—especially in the matter of cost—is extremely inconvenient to us at the present moment, I am sanguine as to its success, and think we shall be able, without much difficulty, to defend its main principles here. I think it most fortunate that we sent out the reinforcements when we did. Frere had made up his mind not to be stopped by the want of them; but if the weakness of his forces had led to any failure at first, a most serious war might have resulted, and we should have had to bear all the blame. Now he has got all the force he asked for, in time to finish off the affair easily and quickly, if his calculations as to what he is undertaking are at all accurate.

Frere's calculations had not taken sufficiently into account those characteristics of British Generals, when fighting in South Africa, which have so often resulted in the opening of our campaigns there with a serious check if not with disaster: namely, over-confidence, disregard of local advice, and under-estimate of the enemy. All these contributed their share to the fatal day of Isandhlwana, January 22, 1879. The Cabinet were, therefore, as unprepared as the public for the news; and to Beaconsfield himself it was a crushing blow, as he saw at once how injuriously it must affect England's position abroad, and his Cabinet's position at home.

[1] Lord Chelmsford.

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To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING STREET, *Feb.* 11, 1879.—Lord Beaconsfield with his humble duty to yr. Majesty. It has been a very agitating day with this terrible news from S. Africa, which to Lord Beaconsfield is very unintelligible. The Cabinet met, and have sent five regiments of Infantry instead of three asked for by Lord Chelmsford, and all the Cavalry, and Artillery, and stores which he requested. It is to be hoped, that he may be equal to the occasion, but it is impossible not to feel, that this disaster has occurred to the Headquarters column, which he was himself commanding. This sad news has come when, by indefatigable efforts, everything was beginning to look bright. It will change everything, reduce our Continental influence, and embarrass our finances.

From Queen Victoria.

OSBORNE, *Feb.* 12, 1879.—. . . [Lord Beaconsfield] must not be downhearted for a moment, but show a bold front to the world. This ought, however, to be a lesson *never* to reduce our forces, which was just going to be done; for, with our enormous Empire, we must always be prepared for such contingencies. . . .

To Lady Bradford.

10, DOWNING STREET, *Feb.* 12, '79.—I could not write to you yesterday, and am equally incapable to-day. I am greatly stricken; and have to support others, which increases the burthen; almost intolerable. I know not which I dread most, the banquet to-day, or the Senate to-morrow. The Prince of Wales comes to me in half an hour. He is from Osborne; yesterday the D. of Cambridge was with me.

Everybody was congratulating me on being the most fortunate of Ministers, when there comes this horrible disaster!

It is not surprising that this blow should have prostrated Beaconsfield physically; and it is clear that he had a serious relapse during the remainder of this month, when the energies of the Government were mainly directed to retrieving, as quickly as possible, the position in South Africa.

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING ST., *Feb.* 18, 1879.—Lord Beaconsfield . . . is greatly distressed at not having the honor and the happiness of an audience of yr. Majesty to-day, but he is really quite

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prostrate, tho' Dr. Kidd assures him his malaise will pass away, and even speedily. Still he cannot shut his eyes to the fact, that he has rarely left his roof for the last three months, and he feels that so great a Sovereign as yr. Majesty should not have a sick Minister. This is the anniversary of the fifth year of the existing Administration. He hopes he has not altogether failed in devotion to yr. Majesty, and in some accomplishment of Yr. Majesty's policy, but he feels deeply how much in any efforts he owes to yr. Majesty's support and expression of confidence. . . .

From Queen Victoria.

WINDSOR CASTLE, *Feb.* 18, 1879.—The Queen has just received Lord Beaconsfield's kind letter. She is so grieved to hear that he is not well, but hopes it will soon pass off, and that he will for long yet continue to direct the councils of his Sovereign, which he has done so ably and firmly, and to whom he has shown such great personal devotion and kindness. . . .

The public outcry against both Frere and Chelmsford was very loud and very widespread. The general view was that the one, by ignoring his instructions from home, had needlessly precipitated the war which had begun so disastrously; that the other had shown carelessness and incompetence in the field. That they should both be recalled was the popular demand. The Cabinet were naturally more incensed against Frere, who had disregarded their wishes, than against Chelmsford, of whose professional adequacy they could not well judge. Beaconsfield, though resenting Frere's disobedience, had the highest opinion of his abilities and character, which he believed to be a tower of strength in South Africa. With regard to Chelmsford he felt himself to be in a delicate situation. He had left Chelmsford, the father, out of his Cabinet in 1868 because he thought him an incompetent Lord Chancellor; it would be distressing to him to have to supersede Chelmsford, the son, as a not sufficiently competent General. It would be fair, at any rate, to allow him a certain time in which to retrieve what had been lost. Beaconsfield did not easily carry the

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Cabinet along with him. He told the Queen that the feeling against both men was very strong, and required 'considerable private handling.' It was decided to take no step against Chelmsford for the present, but to rebuke Frere for his disobedience while at the same time continuing him in a post for which he was pre-eminently qualified.

The despatch of March 19, from Beach to Frere, containing the considered judgment of the Cabinet, stated that 'they have been unable to find in the documents you have placed before them that evidence of urgent necessity for immediate action which alone could justify you in taking, without their full knowledge and sanction, a course almost certain to result in war, which, as I had previously impressed upon you, every effort should have been used to avoid.' But they gladly recorded 'their high appreciation of the great experience, ability, and energy which you have brought to bear on the important and difficult task you have undertaken'; and they concluded by stating that 'they have no desire to withdraw, in the present crisis of affairs, the confidence hitherto reposed in you, the continuance of which is now more than ever needed to conduct our difficulties in South Africa to a successful termination.' The decision represented the exact feelings of the Prime Minister towards Frere; but it was a very illogical one, as the Opposition, who, by resolution in both Houses, demanded Frere's recall, pointed out. How could a man who is publicly censured continue to command the confidence essential to the efficient performance of Frere's high duties? To that question the Prime Minister's speech in debate afforded no answer. He said:

> What we had to determine is this: Was it wise that such an act on the part of Sir Bartle Frere as, in fact, commencing war without consulting the Government at home, and without their sanction, should be passed unnoticed? Ought it not to be noticed in a manner which should convey to that eminent person a clear conviction of the feelings of Her Majesty's

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Government; and at the same time was it not their duty to consider, were he superseded, whether they could place in his position an individual equally qualified to fulfil the great duties and responsibility resting on him? That is what we had to consider. We considered it entirely with reference to the public interest, and the public interest alone, and we arrived at a conviction that on the whole the retention of Sir Bartle Frere in that position was our duty, notwithstanding the inconvenient observations and criticisms to which we were, of course, conscious it might subject us; and, that being our conviction, we have acted upon it.

It is a very easy thing for a Government to make a scapegoat. . . . If Sir Bartle Frere had been recalled in deference to the panic, the thoughtless panic, of the hour, . . . no doubt a certain degree of odium might have been averted from the heads of Her Majesty's Ministers, and the world would have been delighted, as it always is, to find a victim. This was not the course which we pursued, and it is one which I trust no British Government ever will pursue. We had but one object in view, and that was to take care that at this most critical period the affairs of Her Majesty in South Africa should be directed by one not only qualified to direct them, but who was superior to any other individual whom we could have selected for that purpose. The sole question that we really have to decide to-night is: Was it the duty of Her Majesty's Government to recall Sir Bartle Frere in consequence of his having declared war without our consent?

Beaconsfield proceeded to declare that the policy of the Government in South Africa was still what it had always been, and what Carnarvon selected Frere to carry out—a policy of confederation, and emphatically not one of annexation. 'I myself regard a policy of annexation with great distrust.' If they had annexed the Transvaal, it was because the circumstances were peculiar; that was 'a territory which was no longer defended by its occupiers.' But, while he trusted we should shortly defeat the Zulus in a significant manner, he altogether disclaimed any intention either of exterminating them or of annexing their country. Though Ministers had a majority of 95 in the Lords, they were only supported in the Commons by a majority of 60.

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To Lady Bradford.

HOUSE OF LORDS, *April* 4.—I hope you like our popular Budget!!! Gladstone, Childers, and Goschen are furious and frantic. Rylands goes about roaring 'There never was such a sell.'[1] . . .

10, DOWNING STREET, *April* 14, '79.—. . . Two baskets of primroses, made up into little bouquets, have just arrived from Osborne. The head g[ardene]r there has orders, he says, to send them every week. .

Prince Hal is sanguine—nay, sure—that Bartle F. and Chelmsford will come out triumphant. I wish I shared his convictions. . . .

April 21.—I found the post wd. not allow my writing to you from Hatfield, or rather the Sabbath-stricken trains, which are as immovable as in Scotland.

I went down there[2] with the hope that I might combine business and frequent tels. with the burst of spring; but that has been a failure. The sun appeared on Saturday, but with a cutting easterly wind, in wh. I am sorry to hear that you sat out. And on Sunday it poured, and now I am in London again, black and terribly cold.

There was literally nobody at Hatfield save the family—but that is a numerous and amusing one. Five boys, the youngest quite an urchin, hardly breeched but giving his opinion on public affairs like his brothers. The *Standard* is his favourite paper, but he did not approve of its leading article on Russia of that day, 'the tone too sarcastic'!!!

The course of events in South Africa and the despatches and letters received from Frere and Chelmsford tended to strengthen the current setting against both of them in the Cabinet. 'Sir Bartle Frere,' wrote Beaconsfield to the Queen on April 8, 'persists in vindicating his conduct to the alarm of the Cabinet, the majority of whom is decidedly in favour of his recall; but Lord Beaconsfield feels that such a step, after the recent discussions in Parliament, would be as damaging to yr. Majesty's Government as to Sir Bartle.' But a month later he felt that matters could not be left to drift on without a change. 'The news from the Cape very unsatisfactory,' he wrote to Lady Chesterfield on May 8. 'Chelmsford

[1] Because there were no new taxes.

[2] For the Easter holiday.

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wanting more force, tho' he does nothing with the 15,000 men he has. He seems cowed and confused.' The long delay on the spot in taking steps to retrieve the disasters of the beginning of the year exasperated the public at home as well as the Prime Minister; and the Cabinet came to the conclusion that it was necessary to have a new man as their representative in the theatre of South African war. They had three sittings in rapid succession, and Beaconsfield thus reported their decision to Her Majesty.

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING STREET, *May* 19, 1879.—. . . The Cabinet sat for more than two hours on the affairs of South Africa, which they found most unsatisfactory; no despatches by this packet, either from the Lord High Commissioner, or the Commander-in-Chief, tho' an abundance of private information, which would show that the expenditure for transport was enormous, and aggravated by the misunderstanding which appears to subsist between the Commander-in-Chief, and Sir Henry Bulwer, the Governor of Natal. Lord John Manners, Dukes of Richmond and Northumberland, Mr. Secretary Stanley, and Sir H. Beach, supported Lord Chelmsford, but all acknowledged that yr. Majesty's Government were left in a state of great darkness, and that no one seemed clearly to understand what we were aiming at, and what terms would satisfactorily conclude the war. The Cabinet adjourned their decision, but the prevalent, not to say unanimous, opinion seemed to be, that without superseding either Sir Bartle or Lord Chelmsford, a 'dictator' should be sent out, intimately acquainted with the views and policy of yr. Majesty's Government, who should be able to conclude peace, when the fitting opportunity occurred, and effect a general settlement. . . .

What may be called the preliminaries of peace have been signed by the Ameer of Afghanistan. This will be announced to both Houses to-night, a great event. . . .

May 23.—The third consecutive Cabinet has just closed on the affairs of South Africa. . . . The Cabinet is of opinion that the civil and military commands in S. Africa should be rearranged. The authority of Sir B. Frere to extend over the Cape Colony and the territories adjacent (Sir B. F. will be 1,000 miles from the seat of war). Sir Garnet Wolseley to be yr. Majesty's High Commissioner, and Commander-in-Chief for Natal, Transvaal, and territories adjacent, including Zululand, and to have within that area supreme civil and mili-

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tary authority under yr. Majesty. Sir Garnet having superior rank, the present Commander-in-Chief will become second in command. If yr. Majesty approves these arrangements, perhaps, as time is precious, yr. Majesty may telegraph yr. Majesty's answer, or do so indeed if yr. Majesty wishes further information immediately.

The Queen telegraphed at once strongly deprecating the arrangement. Perhaps it was in view of the storm of royal opposition which he was evidently about to encounter that Beaconsfield couched his congratulations on Her Majesty's birthday next day in his highest vein of extravagance.

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING STREET, *May* 24, 1879.—To-day Lord Beaconsfield ought fitly, perhaps, to congratulate a powerful Sovereign on her imperial sway, the vastness of her Empire, and the success and strength of her fleets and armies. But he cannot, his mind is in another mood. He can only think of the strangeness of his destiny, that it has come to pass, that he should be the servant of one so great, and whose infinite kindness, the brightness of whose intelligence and the firmness of whose will, have enabled him to undertake labors, to which he otherwise would be quite unequal, and supported him in all things by a condescending sympathy, which in the hour of difficulty alike charms and inspires.

Upon the Sovereign of many lands and many hearts, may an omnipotent Providence shed every blessing that the wise can desire, and the virtuous deserve! If this year has been a year of gloom, may the bright shadow of the coming hours illumine her with their happiness, sustain her in her state, and touch with an enchanting ray the hallowed influences of her hearth!

The Queen was not placated by these compliments, but sent a reasoned remonstrance well worthy of consideration.

From Queen Victoria.

BALMORAL, *May* 26, 1879.—The Queen telegraphed in cypher twice to Lord Beaconsfield in answer to his cypher and letter. She can only repeat in the very strongest terms her opinion on this all-important subject of S. Africa. Whatever fault may have been committed in declaring, (perhaps) too hastily, war, Sir B. Frere seems to have succeeded, by his per-

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sonal influence, in conciliating those important portions of the Colonies, who were considered to be disaffected.[1] To reward his efforts therefore by sending out an officer with the powers proposed, instead of encouraging him, will be a public mark of want of confidence—at a moment of great difficulty—which will have a most disastrous effect both at home and abroad; and will make it almost impossible for any public man to serve his country if on the 1st misfortune occurring he is to be thrown over! The case of Lord Chelmsford may, perhaps, be less certain, but he also seems to have been successful of late.

And the Queen most strongly protests against the use of private information, than which nothing more injurious to discipline and good government can exist. This was one of the causes of our suffering in the Crimea and led to every sort of evil. No Commander or Governor can stand against or submit to that; and the Queen can only attribute this to the inexperience of public life in some of his colleagues.

If it is absolutely necessary to prevent any peace being concluded which the Govt. would disapprove, send someone out with messages to Sir B. Frere and Lord Chelmsford to explain exactly what the Govt. wish and what they object to. But do not upset everything—which will be the case if an officer, whoever he may be, is sent out with the powers proposed.

The Queen would sanction the proposal submitted if her warnings are disregarded, but she would *not approve* it. This is confidential, but Lord Beaconsfield can read any portion of it, he thinks proper, to the Cabinet.

The Cabinet persisted, in spite of royal disapproval.

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING STREET, *May* 27, 1879.—. . . Yr. Majesty's cyphered telegram, dated 23rd inst., was received on the birthday. It gave yr. Majesty's sanction to the proposed arrangements in S. Africa if the Cabinet was really of opinion, that they were absolutely necessary, tho', then, yr. Majesty could not approve them. Lord Beaconsfield passed Sunday, there being no Cabinet on the birthday, in attempting to consult with his colleagues in detail, and in seeing H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge, with whom he had already conferred on the main business some time ago, and who only differed from yr. Majesty's Govt. on the personal point, wishing Lord Napier of M[agdala] to be selected instead of Sir G. Wolseley.

[1] Frere had held conversations with the Transvaal Boers, which for the moment somewhat lessened their discontent.

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It was only yesterday that the Cabinet could be again called together. Lord Beaconsfield read to his colleagues, the two cyphered telegrams of yr. Majesty, and they received a long and deep consideration, but the deliberation ended by the Cabinet unanimously adhering to their previous decision and also urging the appointment of Sir G. Wolseley instead of Lord Napier; among other grounds, on his local experience of the scene of war. More than one member of the Cabinet declared that they could not undertake the responsibility of affairs, if some great and similar change were not agreed to.

It was with much difficulty that Lord Beaconsfield secured the arrangement, that Sir Bartle Frere should remain as High Commissioner of the Cape Colony and its dependencies. These are more than 1,000 miles from the seat of war.

No one upheld Lord Chelmsford. Even the Secretary of War gave him up, and spoke as if the military authorities had done the same. His quarrel and controversial correspondence with Sir H. Bulwer seemed the last drop. Perhaps also the dissensions in his own staff. The Cabinet throughout has not been influenced by private information, a private letter has been rarely introduced, and only in the case of its being written by persons in high acknowledged public place and responsibility.

The Cabinet scarcely closed its labors yesterday, until the Houses of Parliament assembled; and it was absolutely necessary that the public announcement of their labors should be made, as the House of Commons adjourns to-day for the holidays, and had they been allowed to disperse without being apprised of the intentions of yr. Majesty's Ministers, there would have been the usual outcry of *coup d'état*, and customary complaint that important measures are always taken when Parliament is not sitting.

Lord Beaconsfield is pained that yr. Majesty disapproves of the policy of yr. Majesty's servants, but he is himself deeply convinced that the measures in question were necessary for the honor and welfare of yr. Majesty's subjects, and the highest interests of their Sovereign.

The Queen was not convinced. She thought Wolseley unconciliatory, ambitious, and too junior in military standing for the commission; and she recorded her conviction that 'yielding to a cry, and superseding (for it is that, though under a disguised form) so distinguished and able as well as excellent a man as Sir B. Frere is deeply to be regretted; for it will discourage all public servants

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in distant parts, and forms a bad precedent.' The decision once taken, however, the Queen, in accordance with her regular constitutional practice, did everything to smooth the way for the new policy, and to avert the bad consequences which she anticipated. Frere, much to her satisfaction, did not resign.

From Queen Victoria.

BALMORAL, *June* 3, 1879.—The Queen . . . sees and admits the force of the arguments, especially as regards Lord Chelmsford, but regrets anything that might discourage poor Sir Bartle Frere, who seems to have been so very successful with the Boers. However, the instructions seem very properly worded and not in a spirit to hurt Sir Bartle's feelings, she hopes. She has received an interesting letter from him which she encloses and would ask Lord Beaconsfield to send to Sir M. H. Beach, and to ask him to return it to her. She thought of replying to him merely thanking him, expressing her feeling for the great anxiety he must have gone through as well as her satisfaction at the news respecting the Boers; and she thought of adding that she trusted that the arrangements just concluded, and which were necessitated by the great distances and the importance of having a general officer to act both in the military and civil capacity, would prove an assistance and relieve him from much anxiety as well as from bodily fatigue. If Lord Beaconsfield approves would he telegraph? She will also mention this to Sir M. H. Beach. The Queen will then send Sir B. Frere the 4th Volume:[1] and thank him for his congratulations, and she hopes in this way that he may remain, tho' she is fearful that the attacks in the press and in Parliament may make it more difficult. . . .

Beaconsfield had to face opposition from the military authorities as well as from the Queen, as appears from his private letters.

To Anne Lady Chesterfield.

10, DOWNING ST., *May* 28, '79.—We have had a terrible time of it: six Cabinets in eight days. I believe it never happened before. However, Sir Garnet Wolseley goes to S. Africa, and goes to-morrow night, tho', between ourselves, the Horse Guards are furious, the Princes all raging, and every mediocrity

[1] Of the *Life of the Prince Consort.*

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as jealous as if we had prevented him from conquering the world.

As for domestic affairs, the Empress[1] has departed, having presented me with her framed portrait. I met her at dinner last Wedy. at the Salisburys', and on the next day at Marlboro' House. And then she went. There are a good many royalties still lingering about, looking as if they wanted a dinner.

On the birthday, S. and Ida and the little ones came here to see the trooping of the colors, a pretty sight, with a fine day, wh. we fortunately had. S. looks better. They go to Weston on Friday. I am very tired and hope on Saturday to reach Hughenden. . . .

May 31.—. . . The Horse Guards rage furiously, but Sir Garnet has departed. They all complain of the hurried manner in wh. the affair was managed. I dare say. If there had not been a little hurry, he never wd. have gone. They wd. have got up some conspiracy wh. wd. have arrested everything.

All the world now is thinking and talking of a new French actress, Sarah Bernhardt; places, boxes, and stalls taken for more than two months. Lord Dudley gives a great banquet in the midst of Whitsun week, and she is to play in the evening. He invited me, and I declined, as I cd. not forgo country air. I met him at dinner at the Cadogans' on Thursday, and he was stiff and said, 'Not yet departed, I see.' I replied, 'No, I go for my holidays, and they have not yet commenced.' 'Holidays are a convenient word.' Huffish. . . .

It was a small circle, but a perfect repast. Our host (Cadogan) a very rising man. With Edward Stanhope, and George Hamilton, he will make some day a future Minister.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *June* 3.—. . . We came down here (Monty and myself) on Saturday,[2] but it has scarcely ever ceased raining.

I cannot write any more. I have just received a tel. announcing the death of Baron Rothschild, one of my greatest friends, and one of the ablest men I ever knew. I am greatly shocked. Very sudden and 'short the illness.' I presume a fit.

To Lady Bradford.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *June* 5, '79.—. . . The country is lovely, now that great gilder and varnisher, the sun, has touched up the picture; bloom and blossom still behindhand, but this delay compensated for by the extraordinary luxuriance of the foliage. I never knew my beeches so heavy with leaf. . . .

[1] Of Germany. [2] June 1 was Whitsunday.

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10, DOWNING STREET, *June* 6.—. . . To-morrow there is a Cabinet at eleven, and a meeting of the party immediately afterwards. Affairs have got into such a mess in the House of Commons that I am obliged to call the party together.[1] It is the first time since I left the House of Commons, and only the second time since the existence of the present Ministry, wh. shows how loyal and true the party has run. . . .

June 13.—. . . Cardinal Manning paid me a long visit yesterday, followed by M. Lesseps, who wants to cut thro' the Isthmus of Panama; it can be done in eight years, and wd. cost only forty millions (sterling). . . .

Wolseley's appointment gave general satisfaction to opinion at home; but, before he could take over the command of the forces in the field, Chelmsford had once more made a general advance into Zululand and had gained on July 4, six days after his successor's arrival in Natal, a complete victory at Ulundi, which practically brought the war to an end. Wolseley's main work was consequently of a civil character. He made a temporary settlement of Zululand by dividing it up among a series of petty chieftains; and he gave a Crown Colony constitution to the Transvaal, solemnly assuring the disaffected Boers that the annexation would never be revoked. But he reckoned without Gladstone; and he could not foresee Majuba Hill.

Wolseley was a favourite with Beaconsfield, though the statesman was not blind to the soldier's foibles, as a letter to the Queen in this autumn shows.

To Queen Victoria.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Aug.* 24, 1879.—. . . With regard to Sir G. Wolseley, Lord Beaconsfield will write to yr. Majesty with that complete and unlimited confidence which, he trusts, has always distinguished the remarks he has had the honor of submitting to his Sovereign.

It is quite true that Wolseley is an egotist, and a braggart. So was Nelson. Mr. Pitt always treated him to the last as a charlatan, and doled out the honors of the Crown, when rewarding him for his magnificent exploits, with a parsimony

[1] The meeting was successful in rallying the party to the support of the Army Discipline Bill.

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which posterity has unanimously condemned. He advised the Crown, for example, to make Jervis Earl for the battle of St. Vincent, which was mainly won by Nelson, then second in command, while an Earl's coronet was only bestowed on the corpse of Nelson, and this after Aboukir and Copenhagen and Trafalgar.

Men of action, when eminently successful in early life, are generally boastful and full of themselves. It is not limited to military and naval heroes, and if Lord Beaconsfield, with many other imperfections, has escaped these two imputations, it is, probably, only due to the immense advantage, which he has enjoyed, of having been vilified and decried for upwards of forty years, and which has taught him self-control, patience, and some circumspection. . . .

One distressing incident of the Zulu War caused Beaconsfield much worry and anxiety. The ex-Prince Imperial of France, who since the fall of the Second Empire had lived with his mother, the Empress Eugénie, in exile in England, and who had undergone a thorough military training at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, pressed, as any spirited soldier of twenty-three in his position would have pressed, to be allowed to join the British Army in South Africa. The Queen, at the Empress's request, was disposed to consent. Ministers objected. 'I did all I could to stop his going,' Beaconsfield told Redesdale afterwards. 'But what can you do when you have to deal with two obstinate women?'

To Lord Salisbury.

10, DOWNING ST., *Feb.* 28, 1879.—I am quite mystified about . . . the Prince Imperial. I thought we had agreed not to sanction his adventure? Instead of that, he has Royal audiences previous to departure, is reported to be a future staff officer, and is attended to the station by Whiskerandos himself, the very General who was to conquer Constantinople.

I have to go to Windsor to-morrow after the Cabinet, and, as I have not seen our Royal Mistress for three months, shall have to touch on every point. What am I to say on this? H.M. knows my little sympathy with the Buonapartes.

Though the Prince went out, not as an officer in the British army, but in some undefined capacity, he was

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attached to the staff in the theatre of war, and at the beginning of June was killed by the Zulus in a small outpost affray. Beaconsfield, on receipt of the news, wrote to the Queen, who was bitterly grieved: 'The death of Prince Louis with its consequences is a tragedy, equalled only by the death of the Emperor Maximilian of Mexico and the consequences of that heartrending event. In a certain sense the two catastrophes are connected, and would form materials for a series of Greek tragedies.' To Lady Chesterfield he expressed his anxiety lest this unfortunate affair, and the inordinate sympathy felt and expressed by the Queen, might lead to a misunderstanding between England and France, now on friendly terms. Happily the correctness of the Ministerial attitude prevented trouble.

To Anne Lady Chesterfield.

10, DOWNING STREET, *June* 22, '79.—This affair of Prince Louis Napoleon occasions great perplexities. Her Majesty's Government disapproved of his going to Africa, and when he persisted in his purpose, would not permit him to be enrolled in Her Majesty's forces. He went, therefore, as a mere traveller, but I fear, tho' I do not, as yet, absolutely know it, that some indiscreet friends, in very high places, gave him privately letters to Ld. Chelmsford, begging that General to place the Prince on his staff.

The Queen, who returned to Windsor only yesterday, is much affected by this sad event; but if we do not take care, in endeavoring to pay respect to his memory and express sympathy with his unhappy mother, we may irritate and offend the French people and Government. After all, he was nothing more nor less than a pretender to the throne of France, supported by a well-organised and very active clique, but representing numerically only a small minority of the people. The Queen, who is much agitated about the affair, wh. she learnt as she was leaving Balmoral, telegraphed to me frequently during her route, and I am now going down to Windsor to see Her Majesty, and expect a distressing scene, for I cannot sanction, or recommend, much that Her Majesty, in the fulness of her heart and grief, would suggest to express her sympathy and that of her people at this moment.

The Wiltons gave one of the most successful and prettiest entertainments I easily remember on Thursday last: a dinner

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to the Prince of Wales, which I attended: and afterwards, the principal saloon, turned into a charming theatre, received the world to witness the heroine of the hour, Sarah Bernhardt. Nothing was ever better done, not marred even by the mournful but exciting news of the death of Prince Louis, which arrived in a telegram to H.R. Highness.

On Friday Prince Leopold dined with me at his own suggestion. . . . S. dined with me and some other pretty or agreeable, and pretty and agreeable ladies: Lady Lonsdale, who is now looked upon as our chief beauty, and Lady Clarendon, much admired, and Lady Archie Campbell, who is a spiritualist and looks one, and some others. The dinner was remarkable for one thing—the return to society, after six years of ill-health and solitude, of the Duchess of Abercorn.

I ought to have told you that the Duchess Louise[1] was on my right hand, the soul of everything, tho' she had a patch on her eye! . . .

June 28.—. . . The gout attacked me on Wednesday very sharp but not unkindly, and I have been a close prisoner to my bed, or sofa, since; but the remedies, tho' safe and simple, have been effective, and I quite expect to be out, and in my place in the House of Lords, on Monday.

S., who is going to-day to the Rosslyns in Essex, has just paid me a visit, and she paid me also a visit the day before yesterday with Ida.

Public affairs look well. The Egyptian business[2] has been admirably managed. And the very day that Harty-Tarty was about to commence a campaign against us on the subject, the news arrived that we had completely gained our purpose. A telegram has just arrived dated Capetown, the 10th June, from Sir B. F. saying that the Prince Imperial's body was expected there on the 15th per *Boadicea*. 'No forward move in Zululand, but suggestions for peace conference continue. The sincerity of the Zulu King doubtful.' Sir B. F., who ought to be impeached, writes always as if he were quite unconscious of having done anything wrong!

I was with the Queen on Monday last: a very long audience, nearly an hour and a half; and H.M. talked only on one subject, which seems greatly to have affected her. The body is to be received by the Duke of Cambridge, who will place, on behalf of the Queen, the Grand X of the Bath on the coffin.

I was to have gone to Windsor again on Thursday as the Queen 'had so much to say to me, and had said nothing.' I could not, of course, go, or even move. I am very free from pain to-day, but wonderfully weak, and can scarcely write these feeble lines.

[1] Of Manchester. [2] See below, pp. 441.

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July 12.—I have just got a tel. from the Queen, who had returned to Windsor and who seems highly pleased at all that occurred at Chislehurst[1] this morning. I hope the French Government will be as joyful. In my mind, nothing cd. be more injudicious than the whole affair. . . .

Besides the Zulu and Afghan wars there were other serious external questions pressing during this session upon Beaconsfield. The disinclination of Russia to evacuate Turkey-in-Europe caused him many anxious moments; but the mission of the conciliatory Dufferin to St. Petersburg synchronised happily with a more reasonable spirit in Russian counsels. The Cabinet at home met the Tsar's advances by ordering the British Fleet to leave Constantinople.

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING STREET, *March* 11, 1879.—Lord Beaconsfield . . . is distressed at having to trespass on yr. Majesty at a moment, when yr. Majesty has so many claims on yr. Majesty's thoughts and feelings, but the matter on which he addresses yr. Majesty is as urgent as it is critical. In the last ten weeks, he might say three months, the Court of St. Petersburg has been working sincerely with yr. Majesty's Government, in their efforts to accomplish the Treaty of Berlin, and to secure peace; of this Lord Beaconsfield himself has reason to have no doubt. Unhappily the previous period was differently employed by the Russian Government, and the mischief, then prepared, it is most difficult now to counteract. But it can, and must be counteracted.

The Emperor is a great influence in bringing about this result, and it assists him, in struggling with the Pan-Slav party, to soften, as far as possible, his evacuation of the conquered provinces. He wishes it to be done in a manner which will prove that England has no suspicions of his loyalty.

The enclosed telegram from Mr. Malet will show the opinion of the Porte as to the sincerity of Russia; and we know, from private sources of authenticity, that the Turks have already occupied Adrianople in force. It is quite believed that the complete evacuation will be accomplished in ten days more. If we meet the feeling of the Emperor on this head, Lord Beaconsfield believes that we may count on his cordial co-operation with respect to the paramount difficulty of Eastern

[1] Where the funeral of the Prince was held.

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Rumelia, the successful management of which involves probably the peace of Europe; certainly the existence of the present English Ministry.

What is desirable is that Lord Dufferin, in his audience to-day, may lay the foundation of a satisfactory settlement of every 'burning' question between the two Governments of yr. Majesty and the Emperor. It is most important, that this settlement should not be delayed—if possible not even a day—for the condition of the Turkish Empire is such, that we must contemplate the possibility of a catastrophe in that quarter. Lord Beaconsfield therefore earnestly entreats yr. Majesty to support him at this moment with yr. Majesty's sanction as to the course which he is taking. . . . Lord Beaconsfield observes, in reading over these pages, that he has omitted to assure yr. Majesty, that there will be no difficulty whatever in yr. Majesty's fleet returning, if necessary, to the Turkish waters, and in that event taking up its position at Bourgas, if possible a still more commanding one, than it previously occupied.

After many vicissitudes the situation was sufficiently relieved by May to render comparatively harmless a vehement assault by the Duke of Argyll in the House of Lords on the Government's whole Eastern policy. Beaconsfield's defence was weighty, but it followed the lines of his speeches on returning from Berlin. His rebuke to Gladstone and Argyll was well merited when he expressed his regret that after united Europe had executed 'so solemn an act as the Treaty of Berlin' for the maintenance of peace, 'certain members of the Opposition should, not once, twice, nor thrice, but month after month habitually declare to the world that the Treaty was utterly impracticable, and have used such external influence as they might possess to throw every obstacle and impediment in the way of carrying that Treaty into practical effect.'

To Lady Bradford.

10, DOWNING STREET, *May* 17.—. . . Yesterday we had a warmish debate in H. of Lords, but I don't think the enemy gained much. It impresses on the public that the Russians are actually evacuating Bulgaria and Rumelia, wh. John Bull never believed they wd., but wh. I always declared wd. be the case. . . .

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This year British diplomacy under Beaconsfield took a distinct step forward in Egypt; and the dual control of France and England, which had been in force in a tentative form since 1876, was definitely established and recognised. Both nations had interests of many kinds in Egypt: traditional, sentimental, and material. To France Egypt was the theatre of one of Napoleon's most romantic expeditions, and the land which a great Frenchman had dowered with one of the most magnificent engineering works in the world, the Suez Canal. To England she recalled Nelson's victory of the Nile, and she had of late years become the halfway house to the British Empire in the East; situate on the banks of the great imperial highway, nearly a moiety of the shares in which were now British. Moreover, it was mainly in France and England that Ismail had contracted those loans, the interest on which he found it increasingly difficult to provide. It was vital to the British Empire not to permit exclusive control of Egypt by France; it would be a grievous blow to French pride to accept exclusive control of Egypt by Great Britain. But some sort of interference and support from the outside was inevitable for a country which, according to Stephen Cave's report in March, 1876, was grossly misgoverned and was plunging headlong into bankruptcy. Beaconsfield acted on the commonsense view that, in whatever was done for Egypt, France and England must for the time being go hand in hand.

On April 8, 1876, the Khedive suspended payment of his Treasury bills. The bondholders in both countries, and indeed in Europe generally, took action at once for the protection of their interests; and the Khedive showed himself ready and willing to accept European officials, mainly French and English, to set his house in order. Thus we had the Goschen-Joubert Mission, the appointment of two Controllers-General, Mr. Romaine and Baron de Malaret, and of four Commissioners of the Public Debt, of whom the English Commissioner was the future Lord Cromer and the French M. de Blignières. A

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Commission of Enquiry followed, in which de Blignières and Cromer and another Englishman, Sir Rivers Wilson, took a prominent part. This Commission recommended the establishment of responsible Government and the limitation of the Khedive to a definite Civil List. Ismail professed acquiescence, and appointed in the autumn of 1878 a responsible Ministry, with Nubar Pasha at its head and with Rivers Wilson and de Blignières as Ministers. These changes began to work a serious improvement both in the Egyptian finances and in the condition of the downtrodden fellah. But before long the Khedive chafed under the restrictions placed on his power; he overthrew Nubar in February, 1879, by the aid of a mutiny of Egyptian officers, which he had tolerated if not fomented; and then, a few weeks later, finally upset the European Ministers by means of a carefully stage-managed 'national' protest against foreign interference.

What was the Beaconsfield Government to do? Technically the Khedive's action was not such a slap in the face to England as to France. The French officials in Egypt had, generally speaking, been nominated by their Government; the English officials by the bondholders, or by Goschen, or by the Khedive, the British Foreign Office ostentatiously disclaiming responsibility, though the Prime Minister kept a watchful eye on the selections made. Directly he heard of the *coup d'état* Beaconsfield told the Queen that 'we must act with France,' though 'it does not seem, however provoking may be the result, that the Khedive has as yet done anything illegal, or in violation of any agreement with yr. Majesty's Government.' 'We have not only never acknowledged Wilson,' he wrote in his next letter 'as an agent of yr. Majesty's Government, but have always studiously and repeatedly disclaimed his being so.' The first proposals of Waddington, the French Minister, did not commend themselves to Beaconsfield.

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To Lord Salisbury.

10, Downing Street, *April* 13, 1879.—I can't help thinking that Waddington's scheme is both weak and wild.

It will never do, however indirectly, to threaten the Khedive, unless we are sure of our position with the Sultan. What if he be already squared?

If, therefore, you act on Waddington's suggestion, we ought to make all things safe first at Stamboul.

Then, again, I doubt the wisdom of insisting on the restoration of Wilson and Blignières.

We might fairly insist upon two European Ministers with equal powers and similar duties as the late ones. But, I think, the sooner Wilson disappears from the scene the better.

April 16.—I entirely agree with every word in your mem. received last night. After reading all the papers and correspondence, I had arrived at exactly the same result as yourself. Waddington would have been a blind guide, and notwithstanding all his timidity, would have landed us in an untenable position.

The Khedive has treated two great Powers with discourtesy, and he must be made to feel that they are sensible of it.

What would be desirable, I venture to think, is that he should notify to us, that he wishes to appoint again two European Ministers with the same privileges and powers as the late ones.

But how is this to be brought about? No doubt our diplomatic agent on the spot, if equal to the occasion, by watching and managing, might accomplish this. . . .

An intimation from the Sultan to the Khedive would, probably, on such a point, be decisive—and, tho' the Khedive may have squared Stamboul, the belief of the Sultan, that, until our financial relations with Egypt be accommodated, no hope exists of a Turkish loan, might settle the business. . . .

The two Cabinets determined, after consultation, to try the effect of a grave remonstrance before resorting to extreme measures. Salisbury's despatch expressed a hope that the Khedive's attitude towards European Ministers was not final. If, however, he persisted in renouncing the friendship of France and England, the two Cabinets would 'reserve to themselves an entire liberty of appreciation and action.' It must have amused Salisbury, and Beaconsfield too, to employ towards the Khedive the phrase which the British Government had resented, and which Beaconsfield had covered

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with sarcasm, when it was used by Gortchakoff in an attempt to evade the submission of the Treaty of San Stefano to the judgment of Europe.[1]

The Khedive was obdurate, and his fate was finally sealed by a brutally frank declaration by Germany that she regarded his recent decree, resuming full control of the Debt, as an open and direct violation of his international engagements. Europe was clearly ready to co-operate with France and England in strong measures. Ismail must go.

To Lord Salisbury.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *June* 6, 1879.—. . . Egypt must be grappled with. No wonder you can't go to Dieppe. It is a most dreadful nut to crack.

None of the propositions satisfy me: the Sultan's the best; but I suppose, a romance, an affair of the 1000 and 1 nights. Secrecy and promptitude could alone secure its success, and I daresay everything would be known at Cairo, as soon and as long, as the Spanish Armada was with us. All the other schemes are bricks without straw, a process not unknown to the Egyptians.

June [? 8].—The Cabinet is summoned for Wednesday at noon. I should like to have had some, not hurried, talk with you before we met our colleagues respecting Egyptian affairs, the consideration of which, I apprehend, cannot be delayed. They have occupied my thought much during this wet Whitsun, and I have a strong conviction we must grapple with them.

The situation appears to me to be not very unlike that which long perplexed Palmerston with reference to the same country, and which he ultimately, and successfully, encountered by the Convention of 1840.

His difficulty was to induce the European Powers to join him in interference. That difficulty you, apparently, will not experience, for the European Powers seem quite desirous of contributing to the settlement.

Then, again, tho' France may have preferred that the intervention should be confined to herself and us, the financial interests she has at stake are so great, and so urgent, that, with any fair prospect of these being settled, she would probably not hesitate in joining any combination which might have that result.

In France, finance, and even private finance, is politics.

It is true, that Mehemet Ali set the Convention, at first, at

[1] See above, p. 259.

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defiance, but that was because he counted on France being his active ally. He has no chance, now, of France or any other Power, assisting him, and I, therefore, believe he would yield to the summons of the great Powers, if made in a formal and determined manner.[1]

What he should be summoned to do, is another question, but we need not discuss that now.

I commend these remarks to your good judgment, in which I have much confidence, and to your energy, which is unrivalled.

This, or any other, plan ought not to be placed before the Cabinet until it is matured, so that we should not lose time in desultory criticism. . . .

June 24.—. . . I should be glad to see you about Egypt to-day, but am always loth to trespass on your time, which is most precious. The Government should put its foot down on Thursday and, while expressing its general policy, should firmly decline entering into details of negotiation.

My own feeling is that, if we speak out, and declare that our policy involves not merely the abdication of the Khedive, but the liquidation of Egypt, the House and the country will support us. It must not be, and it is not, a mere bondholders' policy.

On June 19 England and France invited the Khedive to abdicate in favour of his son Tewfik; and Ismail's natural hesitations were terminated a week later, on June 26, by a telegram from Constantinople in which the Sultan, who had been subject himself to the diplomatic pressure of united Europe, announced that he had nominated Tewfik as Khedive in his father's place. The two Powers, having thus changed the ruler, proceeded further to appoint two Controllers, Cromer and de Blignières, under the condition that the new Khedive should have no power to dismiss them without the consent of their respective Governments. It was a definite subjection of Egypt to the joint supervision of France and England. The Dual Control worked well at the beginning because both Controllers were men of high character and capacity, and had already proved by experiment that they could act in harmony. We may perhaps doubt whether, in the

[1] Beaconsfield wrote to the same effect to the Queen, adding: 'Lord Beaconsfield mentions these views to yr. Majesty in secrecy, for they are only known to Lord Salisbury, whose opinion upon them has not yet been given; but in life one must have for one's secret thoughts a sacred depository, and Lord Beaconsfield ever presumes to seek that in his Sovereign Mistress.'

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long run, the system would not have been wrecked by the jealousies and suspicions of individuals and Governments. It was probably well for Egypt that, after two or three difficult years, the renunciation of one Controlling Power left her to the exclusive care of the other. The Dual Control was an expedient rather than a policy; but it was at the time a necessary expedient, in Beaconsfield's mind, in order to preserve a good understanding between England and France.[1]

To Lady Bradford.

HATFIELD, *July* 20.—. . . The weather here has destroyed everything. One cannot but feel for our hosts, remembering the fête, five years ago, of the four thunderbolts. . . .

The banquet yesterday was effective, but I pitied those who had to leave a late dinner for a special train at eleven o'ck. There was a long table in the hall, and two small round tables, wh. were called the Prince's and the Princess's table. I dined at the last, taking out Lady Castlereagh, and there were Salisbury himself, Princess of Wales and Princess Mary, Sweden and Norway, Duchess of Marlboro' and Karolyi. At the Prince's, Harty-Tarty, Dss. of Manchester, Css. Karolyi, Hereditary Baden, Lady Salisbury . . . Lady Spencer. . . Dinner good.

The illustrious guests did not arrive until six o'ck. The day guests at 2.40. . . .

The weather was bad yesterday, but not so bad as to prevent a good deal of damp lawn tennis. Monty, however, prudently played in the tennis court. But to-day is hopeless; a real wet Sunday, and the projected amusement of a fête in the Vineyard utterly vain.

The day I came down, Friday, there was nobody here. It was beautiful: sun and blue sky. I went to the Vineyard, and we had a row on the river, with banks of ancient yews down to the water. They were full of hope for fine weather. . . .

10, DOWNING STREET, *July* 30.—. . . We have still blazing weather, and people begin to talk of better harvests than they imagined. No dinner parties for me. . . . The effort is too great, and I have been obliged to accept the Lord Mayor for 6th—a horror, but it is demanded by party interests, wh. no one can resist. . . .

[1] See Cromer's *Modern Egypt*, Vol. I., Part 1., for a detailed account of these transactions.

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Aug. 4.—. . . The storm was terrible here and in the valley of the Thames generally. It has destroyed a great deal—and to-day looks as black as usual. . . .

At the close of the session there was rather a warm discussion in Cabinet on the method of meeting the bill for the Zulu War. Beaconsfield was determined not to increase taxation at a time of distress and bad trade, in order to pay for a war that was forced on against his wishes by his agent. Northcote, however, who was somewhat of a financial purist, proposed to increase the duty on tea, regardless of the unpopularity that such a measure must bring upon a Government shortly about to face a general election. But Beaconsfield carried his Cabinet with him; and Northcote had recourse to Exchequer Bonds. Beaconsfield considered that it was sufficient that half the additional military expenditure of these troubled years should have been provided out of taxation.

To Queen Victoria.

10, Downing Street, *July* 24, 1879.—. . . The Cabinet this morning discussed the question of the Irish University, which will be introduced to-night, or rather its second reading, by Mr. Secretary Lowther. Lord Beaconsfield is not without hope, that this measure may be carried. The news from Zululand, with the long-awaited sunshine, fill everyone with sanguine hopes. . . . It has fallen to Lord Beaconsfield's lot thrice to advise yr. Majesty on the question of peace or war, and thrice it has been decided for the latter; but neither Abyssinia, nor Afghanistan, nor Zululand, has deteriorated [*sic*] from yr. Majesty's arms. These wars have been brief, and complete and successful. Yr. Majesty threw down your glaive [? glove] in the Levant, but it was not taken up. . . .

July 27.—. . . He assumes that Lord Cranbrook has given to yr. Majesty a sketch of the proceedings in the Cabinet yesterday. . . .

The disturbance in our councils was occasioned by the unexpected exposition of the expenditure of the Zulu War, and of the ways and means proposed to provide for it by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It seems that the immediate expenditure has not been less than five millions, and further demands are anticipated; of this little sum more than a million and a half have been provided by the House of Commons, and this was borrowed. The Chancellor of the Exchequer

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said, that he could not propose to borrow any more, and that the balance must be supplied by taxation; and as an increased income tax had supplied our previous military expenditure, he proposed now to have recourse to a considerable increase of the duties on tea.

It is impossible to name a tax more unpopular. Tea is an article which, above all others, has entered into the life of the people. They have introduced it into their principal meal—their dinner. Its consumption is the basis of the great Temperance movement. The Cabinet was alarmed and its principal members were the strongest in their comments.

We are placed in this painful position by a war, which, if not in time unnecessary, was unwisely precipitated, weakening us thereby in our settlement of the Levant, and which, but for singular energy, would have embarrassed us in the arrangement of our Indian frontier—a war, which, had we had the prudence to prepare the indispensable transport before we declared it, might have been concluded in a month, nor required more than two or three thousand men.

Seeing that the Cabinet could come to no conclusion, and symptoms of acerbity were developing, Lord Beaconsfield adjourned the subject till Tuesday morning, and must do what he can, in the interval, to bring things to bear.

We may be said to have carried on four wars, for our movements in the Levant entailed a war expenditure, and we have done it all at a cost of 11 or 12 millions. A moiety of this has been supplied by taxation, and it would seem to me, that that other moiety might be left to posterity. Mr. Pitt would not have hesitated to bequeath the whole of it in that direction. But alas! there are no longer Mr. Pitts, but a leader of the House of Commons, who, tho' one of the most amiable and gifted of men, thinks more of an austere smile from Mr. Gladstone, or a word of approval from Mr. Childers than the applause and confidence of a great historic party, and a Prime Minister, who, it seems to me, can do nothing in his troubles, but fly to a too gracious Sovereign, and whimper over his own incompetence.

(*Telegram.*) *July* 29.—Prime Minister recommended as alternative to the new taxation proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the Sinking Fund should be suspended for a short and specified time. The whole of the Cabinet approved this plan except Chancellor of the Exchequer, who has not yet adopted it. Cabinet must meet again to-morrow unless Chancellor of the Exchequer expresses his adhesion in the interval.

(*Telegram.*) *July* 30.—. . . Chancellor of Exchequer without accepting the alternative suggested by the Prime Minister

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consents to borrow the necessary sum by Exchequer Bonds. The sum required is only one million two hundred thousand pounds. To have increased the tea duties 50 per cent. for such an amount would have been insane pedantry. Chancellor of the Exchequer is much disturbed, but the Prime Minister has endeavoured to convey to him how greatly he is esteemed and regarded by his colleagues.

Aug. 1.—. . . The Cabinet yesterday was brief, and was only called to give the Chancellor of the Exchequer an opportunity of imparting his new measures to his colleagues with becoming dignity. Lord Beaconsfield trusts that his (Chancellor of Exchequer) self-respect is restored, especially by the reception of his announcement in the House of Commons, where it seemed generally to be held to be a prudent and inevitable course. The scheme of adding 50 per cent. to the tea duties, for the sake of supplying a deficiency of little more than a million, could only be accounted for by what Lord Beaconsfield fears is the sad truth, that Sir Stafford's nervous system has been greatly strained and exhausted by his almost unparalleled labors during this session. Take him for all in all, Lord Beaconsfield doubts whether any other person could have gone thro' so much and so well. If he wants a little backbone, as some say, the sweetness of his temper gains him friends, even among his opponents, and when there was a rumor that he had met with a severe accident, even Jacobins and Home-Rulers seemed depressed and sad. He has only a fortnight more, and he says he thinks he can last a fortnight without breaking down. . . .

With the general results of the session Beaconsfield was satisfied.

To Lady Bradford.

10, DOWNING STREET, *Aug.* 6.—Horrid weather and dispiriting for a City feast, where I eat nothing, and where, after three or four hours of gas, inane conversation, and every other species of exhaustion, I have to get up, with a confused brain and exhausted body, to make a speech, every word of which will be criticised for a month.

As to S. Africa, I shall be disappointed if the next news does not tell us the war is virtually finished. I have confidence in Wolseley, but I believe Chelmsford committed at the last as many mistakes as are consistent with what is called success.

. . Some Canadian Prime Ministers, etc., have arrived in town, and ought to be fêted. I really can do no more, but have been obliged to agree to meet them at dinner at Sir Beach's on 9th.

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Aug. 12.—Visit to Osborne rather lighter than usual. H.M. most gracious and agreeable, and made up for the stupidity and mysterious whispering of the courtiers. . . . By rising at ½ past 6, I got to London yesterday in good business time, having much to do. . . .

Aug. 14.—The Ld. Chanr. and D. of Richmond, and others, have gone down to Osborne to-day with the Queen's Speech, and to-morrow Parlt. will be prorogued. An arduous, but on the whole glorious, session, for, besides our external triumphs, the world will be surprised at the weighty domestic measures wh. we have carried; notably the Army Discipline Act wh., for length and difficulty, was equal to three great measures, and the Irish University Act, solving a difficulty wh. had upset two previous Ministries.

I never had a harder task than to write the Queen's Speech, for the domestic measures were not passed when I attempted to record their being carried—and it was a hard task to carry them. It required a physical effort of no mean character, and if on Monday the House had not sate firmly till 7.10 into Tuesday morn, the faction wd. have beaten us. But that night of terrible determination and endurance cowed them. Mine was not a very gracious effort, when I did not, and could not, share them; but it was not a moment for false delicacy, and I was as ruthless as Ld. Strathnairn in India.

We have a Cabinet to-morrow at 11 o'ck.; prorogation at two; and then I go down to Hughenden; Monty with me till Monday, and then he goes to Scotland. . . .

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CHAPTER XII.

BEACONSFIELD AND THE QUEEN.

1874–1880.

A Prime Minister under a Constitutional Monarchy such as prevails in this country owes to a certain extent a divided allegiance. He is at once a servant of the Crown and a servant of the people. He has a duty to the permanent Head of the British Empire, who appoints him, and appoints him sometimes with a real liberty of selection, and who has the power in the last resort to dismiss him, subject to ratification of his act by the people through Parliament. He has a duty to the people through Parliament, where he cannot maintain his position unless he can command the support, or at least the toleration, of a majority of the House of Commons. As this country becomes increasingly democratised, and as general elections assume more and more the shape of a direct choice of the Prime Minister by the people, there is a tendency to dwell almost exclusively upon the last-mentioned duty, and to ignore, or at least to minimise, the first. Happily, in spite of some glaring instances to the contrary, there has been since the accession of the House of Hanover, and more particularly since the accession of Queen Victoria, such a general harmony between the Crown and the people that the two duties seldom clash. Happily, also, when there is a divergence, the Crown has definitely recognised the obligation to defer in all matters of moment to the will of the people constitutionally expressed; and in consequence to accept, now and again, with a good grace unwelcome advice or an unwelcome Minister.

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Disraeli, when in office, never forgot for a moment that, if he was a servant of the people, he was also the Minister of his Sovereign. 'So long as by the favour of the Queen I stand here' was a notable phrase used by him in the House of Commons as Prime Minister during the constitutional crisis of May, 1868. Though it drew down upon his head storms of indignant protests from shocked Liberals, it was a true and constitutional, if incomplete, representation of the facts. When Derby resigned two or three months previously, the Queen, who might have called upon Stanley, the Foreign Secretary, or the Duke of Richmond, an important Minister in the Lords, to take his place, chose instead to entrust the charge to Disraeli, the Leader in the Commons. Though it was the natural, it was not the inevitable, choice; he was, not only in the technical sense, but actually Minister by the Queen's favour; and Parliament showed no disposition to withdraw its confidence in him under penalty of dissolution.

The Whigs, as a close family corporation whose business, so to speak, it was during many decades to administer our public affairs, and the Radicals, nourished on philosophic theories of popular government, both tended to conceive of the Sovereign as a mere puppet whose strings were pulled at will by the Minister; and they were both impatient of being reminded of his undoubted prerogatives. Disraeli saw in the Sovereign not merely the Chief Magistrate of a selfgoverning nation—a magistrate sprung from a German stock which it had suited the Whigs to put upon the throne of England; but the heir to the historic monarchy of Alfred, of William the Conqueror, of the great Henries and Edwards, of Elizabeth, of the Stuarts, and of the wrong-headed, but sturdy and national, George III. He realised that it was the Sovereign who, owing to historical and personal causes, was the chief unifying influence, not merely in the nation at home, but, even more, in an empire of extraordinary diversity and extent. He recognised, moreover, in the actual Sovereign whom it was his privilege to serve, one who had by the

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seventies a larger mastery of State affairs, domestic and foreign, than any conceivable Minister; one, therefore, of whose judgment and experience the fullest possible use should be made in the government of the country.[1] He was confirmed in this view by noting, in the successive volumes of the *Life of the Prince Consort* then in course of publication, the influence for good on British politics which in the earlier part of the reign the Prince had exercised behind the scenes. The Prince was, of course, seriously handicapped by his highly anomalous position. The Queen, as the actual head of the State, had unquestionable and extensive rights and prerogatives; and Disraeli held that her influence should be felt throughout the administration. There ought, in his own words, to be 'a real Throne.'

It might, indeed, almost be said that Disraeli treated the government of the country as a kind of partnership between the Sovereign and the Minister: a partnership in which each should bring to bear on their common business his accumulated store of knowledge and experience, and in which not merely conclusions should be communicated, but there should be a free interchange of mind and mind before conclusions were reached. The Constitution requires that important decisions of the Minister and Cabinet must be submitted to the Sovereign for his sanction; but there has been a great elasticity in practice as to the extent to which the Sovereign is kept in touch with the trend of the Minister's mind, and with the progress of important transactions while they are still unconcluded. The traditional attitude of the Minister towards the Sovereign, due largely to George III.'s extraordinary treatment of Ministers whom he disliked, has been rather one of reserve, or economy of information. No one can have read the correspondence between Disraeli and the Queen without seeing that his method was very different. He kept his royal mistress constantly informed of the direction his own thoughts were taking in regard

[1] See Vol. V., pp. 143, 144.

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to current politics, and sought her opinion before decisions were come to in Cabinet. He kept her also informed of the disposition and tendencies of the Cabinet as a whole, and even of individual members of it in particular, while great affairs were in process of discussion. Here Gladstone, who was eminently of the traditional school in constitutional matters, was aghast at his rival's practice. He told Sir Robert Phillimore emphatically that if Beaconsfield mentioned to the Queen any of his colleagues who had opposed him in the Cabinet, 'he was guilty of great baseness and perfidy'; and that he himself had never once, in writing to the Queen, referred to the opinion of his colleagues expressed in Cabinet.[1]

Obviously, in Gladstone's view, the report of Cabinet meetings made by the Minister to the Sovereign should be limited to the decisions arrived at, and the reasons on which they were based. But why should the Sovereign be deprived of the knowledge that Ministers A and B opposed on such and such grounds the general view of their colleagues? He knows the Ministers individually, and talks to them of their work, and can form a shrewd judgment of the value of their opinion in Cabinet. That opinion must necessarily weigh with him in making up his own mind whether to encourage his Prime Minister in the policy proposed, or to warn and caution him and endeavour to get the policy modified; the right not merely to encourage, but to warn and remonstrate, being undoubtedly his by the Constitution. Where do the 'baseness and perfidy' come in? Gladstone talked as if, by mentioning dissentients to the Queen, Beaconsfield *ipso facto* designated them for execution on Tower Hill. Far from undermining his colleagues in the Queen's favour, we have seen Beaconsfield, again and again, shielding individuals, like Derby and Salisbury, from what appeared to him to be unfair depreciation on Her Majesty's part, and doing everything in his power to bring her to recognise and value their strong qualities.

[1] Morley's *Gladstone*, Book XII., ch. 5.

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This intimate association of the Queen, which Beaconsfield encouraged, with the development of opinion in the Cabinet, did not imply that he worried her with the tedious detail of controversial business. He would have been quite incapable of pressing upon her attention, as Gladstone did, the minute provisions of a lengthy Bill, accompanied by an elaborate explanation extending over a dozen quarto pages of close writing. Beaconsfield, while keeping her in touch with the principles on which Government were acting in various departments, spared her the drudgery of detail as far as possible. There is so much formal business of ceremony and signature which must occupy the time of the Sovereign that he felt it to be cruelty to add to it unnecessarily.

The close relations between the Sovereign and her Minister did not, of course, escape public attention; and Beaconsfield was in consequence accused by his critics of abuse of the Constitution in a twofold fashion. On the one hand, he was charged with unduly magnifying the prerogative—the sphere, that is, in which a Minister could act with the sanction of the Sovereign but without the direct authority of Parliament. On the other, he was reproached with encouraging the Queen to exercise a personal authority in government which was admired in the Tudors, resented in the Stuarts, and no longer permitted to the Sovereign by the modern development of the Constitution.

The principal instances in which Beaconsfield was said to have strained the prerogative were the summons of Indian troops to the Mediterranean and the Cyprus Convention; in both of which affairs Parliament was presented with an accomplished fact, and given no opportunity of previous discussion. The first case, as we have seen, was treated in Parliament as if it was governed by the proper legal construction of the Mutiny Act and the India Act. If Government under these Acts had the power by law, as Ministers contended and Parliament accepted, then the question of prerogative did not

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arise; but in general it may be said that the movement of troops at a critical moment in foreign affairs must obviously lie within the discretion of Ministers with the Sovereign's sanction. In the case of the Cyprus Convention the ordinary constitutional course was followed. The treaty-making power of the Crown is unquestionable; and in matters of high policy the negotiations have generally been secret. The two vital instruments, which governed our foreign policy in the ten years before the Great War, the treaty with Japan and the entente with France, were negotiated in the same secret fashion as the Cyprus Convention; and no serious politicians have ever suggested that thereby Mr. Balfour and Lord Lansdowne made an undue use of the prerogative. In all these cases Parliament might have expelled the treaty-makers from office and repudiated the treaties; but there, constitutionally, its power ended. The strange thing is that Gladstone, who was largely responsible for these accusations, had himself made a very questionable use of the prerogative in 1871, when he invoked its aid to carry through that abolition of purchase in the Army which he had endeavoured, but failed, to effect by Bill.

There seems to be no substance in the charge of straining the prerogative; but there was some excuse, no doubt, for the charge of enlarging the Sovereign's personal power. It was Disraeli's aim to associate the Sovereign with the work of government to an ampler extent than had recently been customary. He did not, indeed, desire to push to their logical conclusion the theories of a monarchical counter-revolution with which he had dallied in his 'Young England' days. But he did most decidedly intend to raise the prestige of monarchy in the public mind; to keep well before the public eye and well within the public recollection the person of the Sovereign and the important work done by the Chief Magistrate of the nation. In pursuance of this aim he induced Her Majesty to emerge more frequently from her retreat to perform her public ceremonial duties; and he

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rather stimulated than repressed the natural longing of a Queen, and a woman, to leave the impress of her personality on the current of events. Derby, the incarnation of common sense, wedded, like Gladstone, to the traditional attitude of reserve towards the Sovereign, perceived early in the Ministry the drift of Disraeli's mind, and warned him against an excessive complaisance to the Queen's personal wishes. 'Is there not,' he wrote to Disraeli in May, 1874, 'just a risk of encouraging her in too large ideas of her personal power, and too great indifference to what the public expects? I only ask; it is for you to judge.'[1] It may be that Disraeli, before he had conquered an unassailable position in his Sovereign's regard, made no objection, at any rate in matters of small account, to a possibly undue exercise of personal volition. It is certain that, whenever, as happened more often than not, he and the Queen were in cordial agreement over a public question. it was his instinct as a courtier addressing his Sovereign, and as a man addressing a woman, to attribute to her an undue share in the authorship of the policy, and to write about it to her as 'your Majesty's policy.' But the whole record of the unique relation in which he stood to the Queen shows that, in affairs of moment, he never forgot that constitutionally the responsibility was his, and that, unless his royal mistress could convince him and the Cabinet of their error, the policy to be pursued must be his and theirs, not hers.

The one case in which he may be fairly said to have yielded, in a question of importance, his judgment, supported by that of his colleagues, to hers was the introduction of the Royal Titles Bill. But, even there, the concession was only on the matter of time. He was as convinced as she was that there should be an assumption by the British Crown of the imperial title in India, and that the act would confirm the stability and permanence of the British Raj. But it was inconvenient for him, from a Parliamentary point of view, to have the

[1] See Vol. V., p. 414.

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question forced on in the session of 1876. Doubtless, however, he reflected that, if there was one matter in which a Constitutional Monarch had every right to have her personal wishes respected, it was that of her title; and, in any case, he had the reward that the troubles and abuse which he underwent in the process of steering through the two Houses of Parliament the Bill on which Her Majesty had set her heart, finally secured for him her unlimited confidence and a place in her favour that no subsequent disagreements could affect.

For there were many disagreements on details of policy, though there was harmony in the broad outlook. On the Eastern Question the documents we have quoted have abundantly shown the difficulty which Beaconsfield experienced in keeping Her Majesty to that middle course which alone had a chance of support in public opinion. In 1879, over the Zulu War, the disagreement was very serious. Her Majesty, in her laudable desire to support those of her servants who were engaged in difficult civil and military duties on the outposts of empire, resisted, as we have seen, in a determined manner any suggestion to supersede Frere and Chelmsford. It was only with the utmost reluctance that she accepted the proposal to send Wolseley out, although his commission was drawn up in such a fashion as to spare, as far as might be, the susceptibilities of both High Commissioner and General. The climax of disagreement was, however, reached in the autumn, when the fighting leaders returned home from Zululand.

Chelmsford's final victory at Ulundi obliterated in the mind of the generous British public all his earlier mistakes, and he and other South African captains were welcomed in England enthusiastically, and presented with swords of honour suitable to a great war and an untarnished record. The Queen shared the enthusiasm, but Beaconsfield thought it very ill-judged. Her Majesty pressed him to receive Chelmsford at Hughenden, in order to hear his account of his proceedings in South

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Africa. But the Minister would not consent to accord the returning General anything more than an official interview in Downing Street. He gave the Queen his reasons.

To Queen Victoria.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Aug.* 30, 1879.—. . . With regard to Lord Chelmsford, Lord Beaconsfield feels that it would be hardly becoming, in their relative positions, for Lord Beaconsfield to receive him, except in an official interview. Lord Beaconsfield, by the advice he had the honor to offer yr. Majesty, has virtually recalled Lord Chelmsford from his command, and for reasons which appeared, and still appear, to Lord Beaconsfield to be peremptory.

He mixes up Lord Chelmsford, in no degree, with the policy of the unhappily precipitated Zulu War, the evil consequences of which to this country have been incalculable. Had it not taken place, your Majesty would be Dictatress of Europe; the Sultan would be in military possession of the line of the Balkans; the Egyptian trouble would never have occurred; and the Grecian question would have been settled in unison with our views.

Lord Beaconsfield charges Lord Chelmsford with having invaded Zululand 'avec un cœur léger,' with no adequate knowledge of the country he was attacking, and no precaution or preparation. A dreadful disaster occurred in consequence, and then Lord Chelmsford became panic-struck; appealed to yr. Majesty's Govt. frantically for reinforcements, and found himself at the head of 20,000 of yr. Majesty's troops, in order to reduce a country not larger than Yorkshire.

Having this unwieldy force, he was naturally unable to handle it. The release of Colonel Pearson was not accomplished until further delay would have become an infamy; and, had he not been furtively apprised by telegraph that he was about to be superseded, Lord Chelmsford would probably never have advanced to Ulundi. His retreat from that post was his last and crowning mistake, and the allegation, that he was instructed to do so by Sir G. Wolseley, has been investigated by Lord Beaconsfield, and found to be without foundation.

It is most painful for Lord Beaconsfield to differ from yr. Majesty in any view of public affairs, not merely because he is bound to yr. Majesty by every tie of duty and respectful affection, but because he has a distinct and real confidence in yr. Majesty's judgment, matured, as it is, by an unrivalled political experience, and an extensive knowledge of mankind.

In Sir Evelyn Wood and Colonel Buller, Lord Beaconsfield believes yr. Majesty has officers worthy of your colors, and

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who will hereafter worthily maintain the interests of yr. Majesty's Empire, and the honor of yr. Majesty's Crown.

This was, as Ponsonby told Her Majesty, 'a tremendous indictment'; but it did not alter the Queen's opinion in the least.

From Queen Victoria.

BALMORAL CASTLE, *Sept.* 1, 1879.—The Queen has to-day received Lord Beaconsfield's letter, which she must say has grieved and astonished her. Her wish that he should see Lord Chelmsford, as also Lord William Beresford, was that he should hear everything from them who know all and who have gone through endless difficulties, and not to decide on condemning people in most difficult and trying positions *from* the Cabinet, pressed by an unscrupulous Opposition (at least a portion of it) and still more unscrupulous press—without allowing them to state their own case and defend themselves! How *can* civilians decide in a Cabinet on the causes for movements and the reasons for defeat? Lord Beaconsfield himself so strongly condemned the Aulic Council that she *is* surprised at his severity, unmerited to a great extent, against Lord Chelmsford. *He* has obtained the decisive victory at Ulundi, which has paralysed Cetywayo. . . .

To recall a General whenever he is not successful is to act as the French used to do formerly. The Queen maintains that the war was imminent and that the Colonies might have been attacked, people murdered, and horrors committed, which would have ended in a very different way, to what it will do, it is to be hoped, now; but [for] which we shall have to thank those who were engaged in it. There was just as great an envy against Lord Lytton at the time of the Afghan War, and if he had met with reverses probably the same course might have been suggested. The Queen does not pretend to say that Lord Chelmsford has not made mistakes, but she cannot bear injustice, a want of generosity towards those who have had unbounded difficulties to contend with, and who ought to be supported from home and not condemned unheard.

Beaconsfield, distressed as he was at this acute difference with his Sovereign, nevertheless maintained his position, though he sent simultaneously with his reply a letter to Lady Ely, meant no doubt for Her Majesty's eye, in which he protested the depth of his distress, because he 'loved' the Queen.

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To Queen Victoria.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 4, 1879.—Lord Beaconsfield with his humble duty to yr. Majesty. He is grieved that some remarks he recently felt it his duty to make have incurred the displeasure of yr. Majesty, and in that respect, whether his remarks were just or erroneous, he should be equally grieved. Lord Beaconsfield will not presume to enter into a controversy with his Sovereign, but he will ask yr. Majesty's gracious permission to make one or two observations, which may remove misapprehension.

Lord Beaconsfield entirely agrees with yr. Majesty about the pernicious interference of Aulic Councils in warfare, and he never would permit any criticism in the Cabinet either of Sir B. Frere, or Ld. Chelmsford, when the war had commenced. There was an occasion when Lord Beaconsfield, on this head, was absolutely alone among his colleagues, and they had to withdraw their otherwise unanimous views, to prevent the disruption of the Cabinet.

Throughout these anxious times, Lord Beaconsfield endeavoured to form his opinion solely from the letters, public and private, of Lord Chelmsford, and it was only when those letters became confused, he might say incoherent, vacillating and apparently without resource, that he felt it his duty to offer that advice to yr. Majesty, which ultimately led to Lord Chelmsford's return to England. Lord Beaconsfield feels it his duty to say that, before he took that step, he communicated confidentially with the military authorities, and they were unquestionably of opinion, then, that a new commander should be appointed.

Lord Napier was the General whom they wished to select. It was a selection agreeable to Lord Beaconsfield, and he made the proposition accordingly in the Cabinet. It would be wearisome now to trouble yr. Majesty with the circumstances why this appointment did not ultimately take place, and why Lord Napier's name was not submitted to yr. Majesty. Lord Beaconsfield feels conscious, that neither the unprincipled opposition in the House of Commons, which, he hopes, he never shrinks from encountering, nor the equally unprincipled and ignorant press which he has always despised, influenced him in the advice, which he had the honor to offer to yr. Majesty, and he was only moved to it by a pure sense of duty to his Sovereign.

The course of events, however, has released Lord Chelmsford from a painful position, and Lord Beaconsfield sanctioned without hesitation the great distinction[1] yr. Majesty is about

[1] G.C.B.

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to confer on that officer. It had been, perhaps, better, therefore, that Lord Beaconsfield should not have expressed opinions, which have disquieted in any degree yr. Majesty, but the system which he has hitherto pursued, of communicating everything to yr. Majesty without reserve, may be pleaded, he hopes, as some extenuation of his indiscretion.

To the Dowager Lady Ely.[1]

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 4, '79.—. . . I am grieved, and greatly, that anything I should say, or do, should be displeasing to Her Majesty. I love the Queen—perhaps the only person in this world left to me that I do love; and therefore you can understand how much it worries and disquiets me, when there is a cloud between us. . . .

The Queen received Chelmsford herself at Balmoral, and was favourably impressed by his explanations; and once more urged Beaconsfield to be 'generous' and receive him at Hughenden as well as Wood and Buller. But Beaconsfield was obdurate and only extended his invitation to the two subordinate officers; and no insistence by the Queen could prevail on him to do more than go up to town to give Chelmsford an official audience in Downing Street. He fully realised how seriously he had hurt Her Majesty's feelings by refusing her entreaty. He wrote humorously to Salisbury on September 20: 'My greatest [trouble] is from my having refused to receive Lord Chelmsford at Hughenden. I am quite in disgrace, and may probably have to follow Andrassy's example.[2] If so, you will know the truth, and that the cause is not the Afghan War, but only Mrs. Masham's petticoat.'

It has been worth while to give this Chelmsford episode at considerable length to dispel the absurd idea that the Queen's attachment to her favourite Minister, instead of being based on the solid ground of confidence begot by experience, was mainly due to the flattering language in which he addressed her, and to the unworthy compliance which he showed with her every wish. This

[1] Letter quoted in Meynell's *Disraeli*, p. 539. [2] *I.e.*, resign.

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myth has sprung largely from Beaconsfield's ingrained habit of attributing to himself, in his hatred of cant, lower motives than those from which he really acted. Two delightful sayings of his are quoted. He told Lord Esher that, in talking with the Queen, he observed a simple rule: 'I never deny; I never contradict; I sometimes forget.' And to Matthew Arnold, in a conversation shortly before his death, he said: 'You have heard me called a flatterer, and it is true. Everyone likes flattery; and, when you come to royalty, you should lay it on with a trowel.' But the Queen was too much inured to flattery to care for it. Indeed those whom she suspected of concealing their true sentiments to adopt hers speedily lost her good opinion. She was downright and honest herself; and respected downrightness and honesty in others. But she was a woman as well as a Queen; and Disraeli was her only Minister since Melbourne who always bore the fact in mind. To women, as we have seen, his attitude throughout life was one of chivalrous devotion. 'What wonder,' as Lord Esher has well written, 'that his chivalrous regard for the sex should have taken a deeper complexion when the personage was not merely a woman, but a Queen?'

To Disraeli his whole life was a romance: and nothing in it seemed to him more romantic than his relation to Queen Victoria. Take his letters to Her Majesty in 1875 after receiving gifts from her of spring flowers. The flattery is, indeed, laid on 'with a trowel'; but what is most noticeable is the spirit of high romance in which they are written.

To Queen Victoria.

2, WHITEHALL GARDENS, *Feb.* 25, 1875.—Mr. Disraeli with his humble duty to your Majesty:

Yesterday eve, there appeared, in Whitehall Gardens, a delicate-looking case, with a royal superscription, which, when he opened, he thought, at first, that your Majesty had graciously bestowed upon him the stars of your Majesty's principal orders. And, indeed, he was so impressed with this graceful illusion, that, having a banquet, where there were

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many stars and ribbons, he could not resist the temptation, by placing some snowdrops on his heart, of showing that he, too, was decorated by a gracious Sovereign.

Then, in the middle of the night, it occurred to him, that it might all be an enchantment, and that, perhaps, it was a Faery gift and came from another monarch: Queen Titania, gathering flowers, with her Court, in a soft and sea-girt isle, and sending magic blossoms, which, they say, turn the heads of those who receive them.

They certainly would turn Mr. Disraeli's, if his sense of duty to your Majesty did not exceed, he sincerely believes, his conceit.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, *Friday, midnight* [*April* 16, 1875].—Mr. Disraeli . . . returned home late last night, somewhat anxious and wearied, when he found his room blazing, and perfumed, with the gems and jewels of Nature; and presenting in its appearance, and its associations, the most striking contrast to the scene he had just quitted.

He could not refrain from blessing the gracious tenderness that had deigned to fill his lonely home with fragrance and beauty!

Such incidents outweigh all earthly honors: they sustain energy, sweeten toil, and soften many sorrows.

The letter of February 25 is particularly interesting and enlightening. If he could tell the Queen herself that her flowers seemed like 'Faery' gifts from Queen Titania, it is not strange that in writing and talking to his intimates he should use the word 'Faery,' a term of romance if ever there was one, as a synonym for Her Majesty. But it was not only Queen Titania and her court that Disraeli had in mind when he envisaged his Royal Mistress as 'the Faery.' Still more was he thinking of the great Queen who presided over the heroic and romantic age of English adventure and literature, and of the famous poem, one of his own favourites, dedicated to her—the *Faery Queen*. It was after the romantic fashion of Raleigh's service to Queen Elizabeth that Disraeli conceived of his own service to Queen Victoria.

Queen Victoria, without having any of Queen Elizabeth's inordinate relish for courtly and fantastic adoration, would have been more or less than a woman if she had been insensible to Disraeli's attitude; especially after

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MEMORIAL TO THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD.

PLACED BY QUEEN VICTORIA IN THE CHANCEL OF HUGHENDEN CHURCH.

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she had proved his wisdom and tested his patriotism in public affairs. The outcome was an unprecedented intimacy and mutual confidence between Sovereign and Minister. Disraeli exhausted his resources of humour and wit, his stores of epigram and anecdote, for Her Majesty's amusement. The article in the *Quarterly Review* for April, 1901, already quoted, gives a pleasant picture of their social relations.

> He was never in the least shy; he did not trouble to insinuate; he said what he meant in terms the most surprising, the most unconventional; and the Queen thought that she had never in her life seen so amusing a person. He gratified her by his bold assumptions of her knowledge, she excused his florid adulation on the ground that it was 'Oriental,' and she was pleased with the audacious way in which he broke through the ice that surrounded her. He would ask, across the dinner-table, 'Madam, did Lord Melbourne ever tell your Majesty that you were not to do this or that?' and the Queen would take it as the best of jokes. . . . She loved the East, with all its pageantry and all its trappings, and she accepted Disraeli as a picturesque image of it. It is still remembered how much more she used to smile in conversation with him than she did with any other of her Ministers.

Of the letters which he used to write her, blending business with sympathy, and affairs with romance, these volumes are full. Here is an attractive specimen, giving an account of Beaconsfield's conversation with the young Prince Alexander of Bulgaria, in whom and whose fortunes Her Majesty was peculiarly interested.

To Queen Victoria.

> 10, DOWNING STREET, *June* 13, 1879.—. . . Lord Beaconsfield saw a good deal of the Prince of Bulgaria, considering the brevity of his visit. Lord Beaconsfield was pleased and satisfied with him. Lord Beaconsfield met the Prince in society, and had a very long and interesting private interview with him. He solicited Lord Beaconsfield's advice as to his general conduct, and it was conceded to him sincerely and simply.
>
> Lord Beaconsfield reminded him that he had youth on his side, which he should never forget. He was called upon to exercise dominion in a part of the world, where probably, at

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least, sooner or later, there would be considerable changes; that this almost inevitable lot of the Levant would give rise, as it has given rise, to endless intrigues, combinations, offers of alliance, even conspiracies; that what is contemplated rarely occurs, and never exactly as was anticipated, it is the unexpected that always occurs; that he should confine his efforts to making himself esteemed, and beloved by his subjects, and tho' civil to all his neighbours, he should keep himself aloof from their machinations which probably would be disastrous; that being only twenty-two, he could afford to wait the natural development of affairs, which would do for him much more than forced alliances. To be young is a great thing, to be young and wise is irresistible. Finally Lord Beaconsfield recommended him to take the late King of the Belgians for his model, and study his career from the time that Prince was offered the throne of Greece to his illustrious end. In this interview the Prince of Bulgaria showed intelligence and sympathy, and seemed natural and sincere.

Lord Salisbury, who had to give him a banquet at 4 and 20 hours' notice, managed well. As it was Ascot week, independent of other difficulties, it was impossible to invoke the presence of ladies, so he invited the diplomatic corps and yr. Majesty's Ministers. Lord Salisbury was afraid it would be very dull, and male dinners necessarily must be—but it was not dull to the Prince of Bulgaria. He met exactly the persons he wanted to see. He mentioned to Lord Beaconsfield what an immense advantage it was to him, that he should thus have become personally acquainted with so many distinguished public men, who, otherwise, would only be to him words in newspapers.

Lord Beaconsfield also had the honor to meet the Prince at the Golden Wedding Banquet given at Prussia House. This really, if the locale had been equal to the occasion, would have been a striking affair. Forty guests in gorgeous uniforms, glittering with decorations, with many Princes, and all celebrated, were materials for a great effect, if there had only been room. It was like looking too close at a picture.

The weather here is tantalising, and tho' there is yet time to rally, the prospects can scarcely be called favorable. Lord Beaconsfield found his own county, tho' backward, yet flourishing, but he has had bad accounts from the great Midland counties. He himself, if he may venture to mention such a subject, is fairly well; and, having in his London garden fine trees of pink may, all in full bloom, he is not disposed to quarrel with his lot, or to believe that spots on the sun have obliterated from the earth all the promise of spring and all the splendor of summer. He remembers, when he first

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served yr. Majesty nearly thirty years ago, having mentioned his passion for pink may, there came the next morning from Windsor a whole thorn tree in rosy bloom. It was a gift worthy of Queen Elizabeth, and of an age when great affairs and romance were not incompatible. All things change, they say, even pink may, but what he thinks will never change—at least to yr. Majesty—is your devoted BEACONSFIELD.

The special favours which the Queen bestowed on the Minister of her preference were innumerable. Besides the earldom and the Garter, she pressed, but pressed in vain, higher honours in the peerage on him, and would willingly have let him have any honour or decoration in her power. In addition to countless gifts of flowers, she constantly, on birthdays and other anniversaries, gave him presents, and received presents from him. Him alone of her Prime Ministers from the thirties to the eighties did she invite to sit down when he had an audience. She excused him, while he was still in the Commons, from sending her the nightly letter in which the Leader had been wont to give the Sovereign an account of the proceedings, and permitted him to devolve the duty on Lord Barrington, who occupied a post in the Household. She excused him also, during nearly the whole of his Ministry, from attendance at Balmoral. She paid him the notable compliment of visiting and lunching with him at his country home at a time when he was a special target of Opposition abuse. For him, more often than for any other Minister since the Prince Consort's death, did she undertake the heavy duty of opening Parliament in person. To him she gave, in December, 1879, the Windsor uniform, a special dress worn by the Royal Family and the members of the Household in personal attendance. She gave it, she wrote, as 'a mark of personal regard and friendship. Lord Melbourne had it, the Duke of Wellington, and Lord Aberdeen. The Queen is not quite sure about Sir R. Peel.[1] But no other Premier had it.' After Beaconsfield's day Lord Salisbury

[1] Sir R. Peel had the Windsor uniform.

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received it from Queen Victoria; Mr. Balfour from King Edward; and Lord Rosebery from King George. Beaconsfield, in acknowledgment, wrote of the dress as connecting him, 'in a certain sense, permanently with your Majesty's service. It will always be a link.'

Here is the manner in which he thanked the Queen, on Christmas Day, 1879, for the latest of a long series of beautiful books.

To Queen Victoria.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Xmas Day*, 1879.—. . . Your Majesty has again added to the chamber where [Lord Beaconsfield] will probably pass the greater part of the future days, that may yet await him, a beautiful volume, fair alike in form and subject, and one of those books, which one may recur to, again and again.

Lord Beaconsfield is infinitely touched by this act. It is not merely that the sight of many beautiful volumes in his library will remind him, that he has had the honor of being the confidant and counsellor of a great Sovereign, and that too at a critical period of her Empire; but that the gracious Mistress, to whom he was thus bound by the highest sense of duty, was a being, who deigned to acknowledge, between herself and her servant, other sources of sympathy than the cares of Empire, and found them in that mutual love of the fine arts, of which yr. Majesty is instinctively appreciative, and in which yr. Majesty's tastes were trained and developed by one, who in that, and almost in every department requiring intelligence and sensibility, was himself consummate.

Lord Beaconsfield ventures to send, from this home which yr. Majesty has honored, his earnest wishes for yr. Majesty's private happiness, and for the fame and glory of your reign.

From Queen Victoria.

OSBORNE, *Dec.* 26, 1879.—The Queen thanks Lord Beaconsfield so very much for his very kind letter and good wishes. Most truly does she pray that he may be long spared in health and strength as her valued and trusted Minister! She is glad the book pleases him. . . .

And here is his tactful pleading with the Queen, which persuaded her to open the last session of the Beaconsfield Parliament in person.

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To Queen Victoria.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Jan.* 10, 1880.—. . . He has much considered the question of yr. Majesty opening Parliament in person. Remembering that the military operations, in Asia and Africa, have both been brought to a satisfactory conclusion, with great credit to your Majesty's arms, and much individual distinction in your Majesty's troops; that the present Parliament has shown on every occasion patriotism and loyalty, always supporting your Majesty's Government in their external policy, by majorities largely consisting of the Liberal party; recollecting also that this loyalty was singularly exemplified, when your Majesty assumed the Imperial Crown of India: Lord Beaconsfield cannot resist the conviction, that on an occasion, which, probably, may be the last when yr. Majesty could personally address your Majesty's Parliament, it would be a gracious welcome, and popular act, for your Majesty to ascend yr. Majesty's throne on the 5th of next month.

From Queen Victoria.

OSBORNE, *Jan.* 12, 1880.—The Queen, having received Lord Beaconsfield's telegram, will no longer delay answering him about the Opening of Parliament. She will make the sacrifice (for there is nothing she dreads and dislikes more) ever ready to do what she can to support the present Govt.—and to gratify her people. . . .

Beaconsfield, for his part, took the warmest interest in the private concerns and in the family joys and sorrows of the Queen. The principal sorrow during his Ministry was the death, in December, 1878, of the Princess Alice, 'the first break,' as Her Majesty wrote to him, 'in my circle of children.' His speech on the Vote of Condolence, in which G. W. E. Russell, an acute but sometimes superfine critic, detected 'inconceivable bathos,' was thought by the Queen to be 'beautiful.' The Princess died of diphtheria, from which all her family were suffering, through kissing her sick boy, after she had been warned by the physicians of the danger of such an embrace. Beaconsfield held the circumstances to be, as they indeed were, 'wonderfully piteous,' and his language, though florid, would appeal to the heart of many besides the Queen.

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It became [Princess Alice's] lot to break to her son, quite a youth, the death of his youngest sister, to whom he was devotedly attached. The boy was so overcome with misery that the agitated mother, to console him, clasped him in her arms—and thus received the kiss of death. My lords, I hardly know an incident more pathetic. It is one by which poets might be inspired, and in which the artist in every class, whether in picture, in statue, or in gem, might find a fitting subject for commemoration.

In spite of her sorrow, the Queen sent Beaconsfield her wonted Christmas letter.

To Queen Victoria.

HUGHENDEN, *Dec.* 26, 1878.—Lord Beaconsfield . . . has received this morning your Majesty's gracious letter. He cannot have a happy Xmas when your Majesty is in grief. . . .

He is always afraid of obtruding himself in such matters. In truth it is shyness, not inadvertence, that makes him often appear negligent.

Ever since he has been intimately connected with your Majesty, your Majesty has been to him a guardian Angel, and much that he has done that is right, or said that was appropriate, is due to you, Madam. He often thinks how he can repay your Majesty, but he has nothing more to give, having given to your Majesty his duty and his heart.

Beaconsfield was profoundly and rightly convinced of the importance of the Queen's life to the Empire, and was rendered anxious by a desperate attempt made on the Tsar's life in 1879. Her Minister, he wrote to Her Majesty, was 'a bubble who will be succeeded by other bubbles, but on your Majesty's life depends perhaps the fate of an Empire—in times of great trial.' He therefore implored her, popular and beloved as she was, not to disdain taking all reasonable precautions, whether walking or driving, 'for human nature is mimetic, and the crazy are often tempted to commit crimes not so much from innate wickedness as from a diseased self-consciousness, which upsets their reasoning powers.' And he impressed on Sir Henry Ponsonby, her secretary, the necessity of having 'adequate experts hovering over the towers and terraces of Windsor.'

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In spite of the fact that the Queen looked with a somewhat jealous eye upon any incursions of the Heir-Apparent into the field of politics, Disraeli's relations with the Prince and Princess of Wales were friendly and cordial; the gracious lady who is now Queen Alexandra especially distinguishing him on more than one occasion with her kindly regard. He told Lady Bradford a pretty story of a dinner at the Hertfords' on May 22, 1875. He there sat next to the Princess of Wales, whose quickness in conversation and ready sense of humour he greatly admired.

I said something about her 'orders,' all of which she wore. She said it was a shame I had no decoration, and she gave me her 'menu,' which was a pretty one, to wear instead. I said, 'Your Royal Highness will not be able to select your dinner.' She replied, 'We will exchange menus, and I will wear yours as an additional order.'

In the last days of December, 1879, the Prince of Wales, who had often been Beaconsfield's host at Sandringham, intimated his desire to be the Prime Minister's guest at Hughenden, and to meet there, as Beaconsfield whimsically put it in writing to Lady Bradford, 'some grave, but agreeable, signiors.' Hughenden was a small house in which to entertain royalty, and, besides Corry, Beaconsfield could only accommodate four other guests. The Prince selected Lord Salisbury and Sir William Hart Dyke, the Whip, from the world of politics; and Lord Rosslyn and Lord Orford, two of Beaconsfield's particular friends, from the world of society. Orford could not come, being ill at Bath; and the Prince suggested Bernal Osborne, another of his host's old friends, as a substitute. The party lasted from the afternoon of Monday, January 12, 1880, to late on the following afternoon, and was most successful. Beaconsfield gave accounts of the visit both to the Queen and to Lady Bradford.

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING ST., *Jan.* 14, 1880.—. . . The royal visit to Hughenden, he hopes he may say, was not altogether unsuc-

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cessful. A Prince, who really has seen everything, and knows everybody, is a guest one might despair of interesting and amusing even for a passing hour, but His Royal Highness was so gracious, and so agreeable, that one hoped he was not wearied.

The conversation was grave as well as gay; and His Royal Highness, Lord Beaconsfield can say with the utmost truth, maintained his part with felicity and even distinction.

His Royal Highness had the opportunity of speaking alone with Lord Salisbury, and also with Lord Beaconsfield, and at more social moments Lord Rosslyn and Mr. Osborne expressed and elicited many a flashing phrase.

To Lady Bradford.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Jan.* 13.—The visit has been, all say, a great success, but H.R.H. does not depart until late this afternoon, and I can only get hold of ten minutes to write to you by messenger, who must depart immediately. He praised the house, praised his dinner, praised the pictures, praised everything: was himself most agreeable in conversation, said some good things, and told more.

When I found out that both Rosslyn and B[ernal] O[sborne] had been his companions at Cumberland Lodge, I was afraid they must have exhausted all their resources; but I was wrong. Success inspired them, and the dinner was like a pantomime, where there are two clowns, and both capital ones. . . .

We played at whist in the evening—his own choice. I had hoped to have induced them to play nap, which wd. have left me alone, for I don't understand that mystery. But he wd. not have it, and insisted on playing with B. O. against Salisbury and myself at whist. He beat us, which does not displease him.

To-day he rambled about the grounds, and then took a drive in a snowstorm and in an open carriage to Wycombe and about. . . .

10, DOWNING ST., *Jan.* 15.—. . . They returned from their barouche drive in a snow storm in high spirits; his companions, Monty, and the two clowns; B. O. affecting seriousness and sense of hardship, his Grace the Lord Commissioner, on the other hand, rollicking.

H.R.H. disappeared then for an hour, and told me he had been writing an account of Hughenden to the Princess. Then there was a very successful, but very long, luncheon, and then, after a little wandering about the house, he departed, having, he said, 'greatly enjoyed himself.'

Salisbury behaved very well, and helped me much. . . .

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Beaconsfield showed a shrewd appreciation both of the social gifts and of the political promise of the future King Edward, in writing of him to his intimates as 'Prince Hal,' after the merry Prince who developed, upon the throne, into the heroic victor of Agincourt.

It was natural that a Minister for whom the Sovereign entertained an exceptional regard should receive many marks of attention from the Royal Family. A special compliment was paid him, early in his last Ministry, by the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, who asked him to their house-warming dinner-party at Clarence House; a party at which there were none but royalties present, except Disraeli and Dr. Quin, the homœopathic physician and wit—even equerries and ladies-in-waiting being excluded. The attentions, indeed, which he received from Princes and Princesses were so numerous as to be sometimes embarrassing, and were not always considerate. He declined altogether to oblige a Princess who, at a time of political crisis, asked the Prime Minister to call on her at a quarter to ten in the morning. 'Had I been as idle as a ploughboy sitting on a gate,' he told a friend, 'I would not have gone. A liberty to ask me to derange my day for such frivolity!' Outside the Queen, and the Prince and Princess of Wales, the member of the Royal Family whom he most highly appreciated, and whom he was most pleased to meet in society, was undoubtedly the vivacious Princess Mary of Cambridge, Duchess of Teck. With her brother, the Duke of Cambridge, he was on friendly terms, but he came, by the end of his period of office, to distrust the influence of the Horse Guards under the Duke's control.

To Lady Bradford.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Dec.* 26, 1879.—. . . Sir Garnet Wolseley has not disappointed me. He is one of those men who not only succeed, but succeed quickly. Nothing can give you an idea of the jealousy, hatred, and all uncharitableness of the Horse Gds. against our only soldier. The Horse Guards will ruin this country, unless there is a Prime Minister

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who will have his way, and that cannot be counted on. Fortunately he has the power, if he have only the determination. You cannot get a Secy. of War to resist the cousin of the Sovereign, with whom he is placed in daily and hourly communication. I tremble when I think what may be the fate of this country if, as is not unlikely, a great struggle occur, with the Duke of Cambridge's generals. . . !

Though Beaconsfield sometimes wrote to his friends impatiently of courtiers, he always showed the greatest courtesy and consideration to those about the person of the Sovereign; and was consequently more popular at Court than statesmen are wont to be. With Lady Ely, General Grey, and Sir Henry Ponsonby he maintained very friendly and confidential relations. Here is the tribute paid to him on his retirement by the Queen's shrewd and faithful secretary, who was, be it observed, a Whig.

From Sir Henry Ponsonby.

WINDSOR CASTLE, *April* 19, 1880.—. . . I have to thank you sincerely for recommending my name to the Queen for the honour of being appointed a Privy Councillor. . . . I should be most ungrateful if I did not thank you most heartily for the very kind manner you have always treated me, and for permitting me to have free and unrestricted intercourse with you, which has made my duty an easy and agreeable one under your Administration. But however grateful I am for your kindness to me, may I be allowed to add my deep sense of the service of friendship you have rendered to the Queen personally, which has undoubtedly softened her difficulties and alleviated her troubles? Your retirement from office therefore is not only the resignation of a Minister but the loss to the Queen of a true and faithful friend, and my position here allows me, I hope, to share the Queen's real regret at such a separation.

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CHAPTER XIII.

Last Months of the Government.

1879–1880.

When Beaconsfield went down to Hughenden in August, 1879, for rest and refreshment after the session, he was able to regard public affairs with satisfaction save for the continuance of bad trade and bad harvests.

To Lord Lytton.

Confidential. 10, Downing Street, *Aug.* 14, '79.—. . . I write to you now at the end of a long and laborious campaign, which has terminated triumphantly for H.M.'s Government. It is not merely that our external affairs figure well in the Queen's Speech; that not a single Russian soldier remains in the Sultan's dominions; that, greatly owing to your energy and foresight, we have secured a scientific and adequate frontier for our Indian Empire; and that our S. African anxieties are virtually closed; but we have succeeded in 'passing' some domestic measures, in spite of factious obstruction, of first-class interest and importance—notably our Army Discipline Act, a measure of magnitude and gravity, equal in range and difficulty to three great measures, and our Irish University Act, a question which had upset two Administrations.

Although we have entered 'the sixth year of our reign,' our parliamentary majority, instead of diminishing, has increased, and notwithstanding the rumors that may reach you, I see no reason, scarcely a right, to dissolve Parliament—though this, of course, must depend on circumstances. . . .

The only danger and difficulty which the present Ministry has to encounter are natural. 'The stars in their courses have fought against' me. After four bad harvests in this country, we are apparently about to meet a fifth dearth, and one not confined to this country. There can be no substantial revival of trade unless the earth gives us an abundant increase. We

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have had to struggle against four bad harvests and four wars, and it is difficult to carry through a commanding policy with a failing Exchequer. The spirit of England is yet so high, that, I believe, it would endure any amount of taxation if its imperial position were at stake; but taxes, without that sentiment of glory and patriotism, will pull down any Ministry. However, in this respect, things may yet mend, and, whatever happens, it will always be to me a source of real satisfaction that I had the opportunity of placing you on the throne of the Gt. Mogul.[1]

In three weeks' time, before Lytton had even received his chief's optimistic letter, the second disaster of this fatal year had befallen, and had wrecked the Afghan settlement on which the Government prided themselves. Not a suspicion, however, of coming trouble from Afghanistan is to be discerned in Beaconsfield's private letters in the interval.

To Lady Bradford.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Aug.* 19.—. . . We came here on Friday (Sal[isbur]y going same day to Dieppe), rode over the new estate on Saturday, a finish day, with the agent, and the chief tenant, who complained of nothing and asked for nothing, and is a furrier at Wycombe and is worth £30,000, so I suppose he means to pay under all circumstances. The old tenants think me quite mad in buying land in this county, and evidently intend to decamp: but they have got to Xmas now! . . .

Aug. 20.—. . . This place is desolate, and except on Saturday, wh. I have described to you, I have never been able to get out. It has rained night and day The peacocks have no tails and are yet still moulting. They persist in showing themselves, like Falstaff's ragged regiment. They have eaten all the flowers, and have no beauty to substitute for that which they have destroyed. Nothing can now save the harvest. . . .

Aug. 22.—. . . Dufferin writes that he attended the grand review by special invitation, and that in the course of the morning [the Emperor] held the most friendly and amiable conversation with him. The Emperor wonderfully pleased by what I said of him at the Mansion House, and all the generals did nothing but praise Ld. Beaconsfield and England! Quite a new thing! from which I infer that their expedition to Merv has failed, and that the heat, and the want of water,

[1] This letter is quoted, in part, in *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration.*

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and the desert, have floored them. Duff[erin] was particularly to impress upon Ld. Beaconsfield that the Emperor had no intention, and never had one, of going to Merv. Probably not, now.

I have not read a word that Gladstone has written, or spoken, for nearly a year; but I like your criticism, and hope your judgment is correct, tho' I think the agricultural bankruptcy must finish us.

Aug. 25.—. . . The peacocks look better; crouching in the sun which lights up their purple necks, while the loss of the rest of their splendor is not so obvious. One of the ladies presented me on Saturday with a family of four: an almost unprecedented event, as they seldom exceed 1 or 2, and these are hatched always in wild places and mysterious woods.

Aug. 30.—. . . Wolseley writes in good spirits, and evidently thinks that he shall make a good and quick job of it. . . .

Sept. 2.—The P[rime] M[inister] of the Dominion of Canada[1] arrived yesterday and departed by early train this morning, having given me a bad night and leaving me very exhausted. He is gentlemanlike, agreeable, and very intelligent: a considerable man, with no Yankeeisms except a little sing-song occasionally at the end of a sentence. It is a pity these people always come when everybody is scattered. It wd. not have been half as exhausting to have given him a London dinner, or more. But it was necessary, for many grave reasons, that he should not depart and feel on his return, like the Dss. of Marlboro', 'that she had had no attention paid to her.' Considering that the Princess Louise is V[ice] Queen of Canada, it is to be regretted that Lorne's Prime Minister, the head too of the English and Conservative party, shd. not have been invited to dine with our Sovereign the day he was sworn in of the Privy Council at Osborne. . . .

By the bye, the Canadian chief is said to be very like your humble servant, tho' a much younger man. I think there is a resemblance. He says the Princess is a great success in Canada, which was a toss up: but she is extremely gracious, speaks to everybody and is interested in everything, and skates divinely! . . . I fear that Lorne, tho' he tries hard, has not made them forget Dufferin.

Haymerle, it is settled, is to succeed Andrassy, tho' it will not be announced at present. This is an anti-Russian appointment, and will suit England well. He is not a great noble: I believe a plebeian, and looks one; nor will he set the Danube

[1] Sir John A. Macdonald.

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on fire; but he has great experience in affairs, thoro'ly knows his business, and is honorable.

Upon these quiet autumn days at Hughenden there burst, on September 6, the terrible news that the British Envoy, Mission, and escort at Cabul had been treacherously attacked by Afghan soldiers, and had all perished. The presence of a British Envoy in Cabul had long been held by Beaconsfield, Salisbury, and Lytton to be most desirable; but, in view of Sher Ali's notorious objection, no proposal of the kind had been made in any of the numerous negotiations with him since Lytton's arrival in India. When, however, Sher Ali had fled and died in exile, and Afghanistan, owing to the victorious advance of our three columns, lay open, from north to south, to British troops, it was natural to include the reception of a British Envoy among the conditions presented at Gandamak to Yakub Khan, the new Ameer, for his acceptance. It was Yakub who suggested Cabul as the place of the Envoy's residence, as it was only there, he said, that he himself could protect him Sir Louis Cavagnari, a brilliant and experienced frontier officer, who had negotiated the Treaty of Gandamak, was appointed Resident; and by his own wish his staff and escort were reduced to the smallest possible dimensions. They were received with due respect and honour on their entry into Cabul on July 24; and, during the six weeks that their mission lasted, Cavagnari, though he noted several unsatisfactory features in the Afghan situation, never showed any apprehension of danger, and on the last day of his life, September 2, telegraphed to the Viceroy 'All well.' Nevertheless next day mutinous Afghan troops stormed the Residency and massacred all its defenders, while the Ameer, if he did not connive at the treachery, at any rate took no steps to safeguard those who were peculiarly under his care.

It was a crushing blow to Beaconsfield. 'I am quite overcome,' he telegraphed at once to the Queen, 'and was trying to write to my Sovereign, but I am unequal to it.'

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The Queen urged immediate action, which the Minister was not slow to carry out. 'We must act with great energy,' Her Majesty telegraphed from Balmoral on September 6, 'and no hanging back, or fear to be found fault with, must deter us from strong and prompt measures. . . . Pray urge this on the Viceroy, and assure him of support and confidence.'

To Queen Victoria.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 7, 1879.—Lord Beaconsfield . . . had the honor to receive this afternoon yr. Majesty's gracious telegram. . . . He will, yr. Majesty may be sure, act on its spirit. The whole Afghan question is now *tabula rasa* and, if necessary, we may march to Herat. It is fortunate that Parliament is not sitting: there is nothing to paralyse us.

He has confidence in Lytton. It is a situation which befits his courage, resource, and imagination.

Alas! for the brilliant Cavagnari! and his friends and companions, whose names Lord Beaconsfield does not yet know, and dares not to think of. And yet such is the high spirit of the service, that Lord Beaconsfield doubts not that there are men ready to take the same post. They serve under an Empress who may well inspire them. . . .

Cranbrook, the Secretary for India, hurriedly summoned back from a Scottish holiday but just begun, came to Hughenden at once; and the Viceroy was assured of the complete support of the home authorities for vigorous measures.

To Lord Salisbury.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 9, 1879.—This is a shaker, and it is difficult, at the first breath, to recognise all the consequences of such a disaster. I fear they will be extensive and manifold. We are all scattered, of course. The unhappy Cranbrook left town on Friday night, to find, on his arrival at Murthly, in the land of Athole, that he would have to return immediately. He will be in town this morning: I hope—and trust—he will be with me by the 5 o'c. train. . . .

I have telegraphed to Cranbrook in favor of the most decided and instant action. Is that in our power? We may be only five days' march from Cabul, but that would be as bad as the great desert, if we have no transport and inadequate commissariat. As for transport, I remember, with alarm, that

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50 or 60 thousand camels have already been wasted. However, these are points on wh. Cranbrook, I trust, will throw much light. . . .

(*Later.*) Our friend arrived here this afternoon. He brought no fresh news from the Ind. Office, nor had he been able to see any member of his Council. The result of our deliberations was a telegram to the Viceroy, assuring him of the support of H.M. Government in a prompt and vigorous advance on Cabul, assuming that his communications were all secured; requesting immediate information as to the amount of troops available for such a movement, as the forces, I fear, are much scattered in cantonments; what was his amount of transport for the operation, wh. he could immediately command; whether his commissariat was adequate?

As to future movements, and general policy, after the occupation of Cabul—that we would not, at present, touch upon.

Of course, that must be decided by the Cabinet, but, in the meantime, I will to you roughly touch upon the course I think we ought to pursue.

No annexation, generally speaking: military occupation for a time absolutely necessary.

I look upon our engagements under the Treaty as null and void, as the Ameer has been unable to protect our Envoy, whose presence at Cabul he himself suggested, as it was the only place where the Ameer could answer for his safety.

If the Ameer himself is still in existence, if we are satisfied of his fidelity, and if the principal Sirdars rally round him, and this turn out to be a merely military revolt, a mutiny of the Herat troops, then, I think, it will be impossible for us to throw over Yakub; but if he is dead or disappears, I don't think we ought to set up another Prince, that, then, we should content ourselves by consolidating our military frontier (retaining Candahar, wh. we must now, probably, under any circumstances) and let the rest of the country quarrel among themselves, and after a certain course of violence, plunder, treachery and massacre, become apportioned among various chiefs. This was Lytton's original plan, but the Cabinet did not then relish it.

What alarms me is the state of the Indian Army, as revealed in a letter from Lytton written to Cran. before the catastrophe. Except Roberts, who he believes is highly gifted, and who certainly is a strategist, there seems no one much to rely on: Stewart respectable; Massey promising; but all the persons, with slight exceptions, to whom we have voted Parliamentary thanks, and on whom the Crown has conferred honors, utterly worthless.

As for General Sam Browne, according to Lytton, he ought

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to have been tried by a court martial, and he goes thro' them all with analogous remarks.

And these are the men whom, only a few months, or weeks, ago, he recommended for all these distinctions!

I begin to think he ought to be tried by a court martial himself; but I have confidence, still, in his energy and resource.

Poor Cranbrook, dead beat with his travel and this great chagrin, has gone to bed, tho' it has not struck ten, so I write this, which he will take by the earliest train to-morrow. 'Tis rough stuff, but I hope may convey a fair view of the situation to you.

Any hurried or immediate meeting of the Cabinet seems unnecessary, and Cranbrook to-day will see Maine[1] about the Parliamentary point of law. He seems to have confidence in Maine about such matters.

Beaconsfield did not permit these external anxieties to interfere with a party at Hughenden of his intimate friends, which was arranged for the end of the month, and which included Lady Chesterfield as well as the Bradfords.

To Lady Bradford.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 10, '79.—It has been quite out of my power to write to you, my attention being entirely absorbed by the awful catastrophe of Cabul, and the necessary measures to take in consequence. . . .

I have heard from Bradford (on the 9th), and have written to him by this post. I do not see why friends shd. not meet, because there has been a national disaster, and therefore I have fixed the 23rd inst. for yr. arrival here, and I hope you will stay at least till the end of that week. I hope the young ladies will accompany you. I have no party of any kind, and fear they will not be amused; no dancing, no charades, no lawn tennis! A dreary prospect! . . .

Sept. 11.—. . . I have had a sharp 8 and 40 hours or so, but am perfectly calm. It is a horrible business, because the Queen has lost some admirable servants, but for no other reason. It will not, in the slightest degree, change, or affect, the policy of H.M.'s Government, but, on the contrary, confirm and consolidate it.

I have good accounts this morning of the state of our troops and of their preparedness. I was a little nervous about transport, but am not now. . . .

Sept. 19.—. . . You will meet Sir Evelyn Wood on Tuesday, who, the Queen tells me, is extremely agreeable.

[1] Sir Henry Maine, the jurist, who was then on the India Council.

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The British power was promptly re-established in Afghanistan by the energy of Roberts, who pressed on rapidly by the Kurram to Cabul, winning a complete victory over the rebels at Charasiab on the way, while in the south Stewart re-occupied Candahar. Yakub, who had early fled to Roberts's camp, abdicated when the General entered Cabul. By the middle of October, we had the *tabula rasa*, of which Beaconsfield wrote, for our Afghan policy. He was wisely in no hurry to take final decisions, though the Viceroy desired to proceed at once with his scheme of disintegration, involving the permanent annexation of Candahar and the neighbourhood.

The Opposition, with Harcourt as their fugleman, claimed that the Cabul disaster showed the justice of their contentions. Nothing was to be expected but disaster if you forsook in any particular the strict Lawrence doctrine of non-interference in Afghanistan. Lytton's mad policy, the Liberals averred, had only produced its natural fruits. In view of the approval of the Mission by the best frontier authorities, such as Cavagnari himself, this criticism did not sound very impressive. A truer criticism, perhaps, would be that Lytton's error lay in misjudging his Ameer. Yakub was both weak and treacherous; and the policy of the Mission postulated, for its success, a strong and reasonably straightforward ruler.

To Queen Victoria.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Oct.* 23, 1879.—Lord Beaconsfield . . . was content with the tone of his colleagues generally, and believes that the unanimous decision of the Cabinet was a wise one. It may be, that the proposals of Lord Lytton may eventually have to be adopted, and even more than his Excellency suggests; but looking, not merely in an Indian aspect, at the situation, they were premature. What we have first to effect, is to establish our military authority throughout Afghanistan, by the occupation of its strongholds. Doing this, and when we have done this, no one will suspect us of 'hesitation and feebleness.' We shall then be in a position to dictate according to circumstances. We have had too many

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fits and starts in our history, as far as Afghanistan and Central Asia are concerned. We must accustom the world a little to the permanence and stability of our authority there. In the military occupation of the country, we can march to Herat if the Russians advance to Merv, we can deal with Persia without being embarrassed by the claims or pretences of any Afghan Sovereign; we can, in short, if we are not in a hurry, consolidate yr. Majesty's Empire, and inflict such a check on any rival Power, which will influence the conduct of all Eastern States. No longer bound by the Treaty negotiated by the gifted Cavagnari, we may make arrangements with Persia, for example, which may tend to the restoration of her influence in Asia, and save her from the ravenous maw of Russia.

Lord Beaconsfield conferred with Lord Salisbury much on this matter yesterday, which had often occupied their thoughts. The Cavagnari Treaty was an obstacle to all this, which, if successfully carried into effect, may greatly affect the position of Russia in Turkey.

The speech of Lord Salisbury at Manchester was of the highest class of eloquence. It has much influenced public opinion, and is a striking contrast to the brilliant flippancy of Sir W. Harcourt, and its utter refutation. . . .

Beaconsfield did not give any hint, in his speech at Guildhall on Lord Mayor's Day, of the nature of the future settlement of Afghanistan. But he seized the opportunity to rebuke the hostile and depreciatory criticism to which Lytton had been subjected by the Opposition orators and press, and to pronounce an emphatic eulogy of his conduct. 'For my own part, I have rarely met a man in whom genius and sagacity were more happily allied than in Lord Lytton, a man of greater resource, or one possessing in such degree that highest quality of public life—courage in adversity, and firmness and constancy in difficulty and danger.' It was to Lytton's policy of disintegration that, in the apparent absence of any chief strong enough to hold Afghanistan together, the Cabinet came gradually round. But Beaconsfield and Salisbury desired, in addition, to negotiate an agreement with Persia, under which, in accordance with that policy, Herat should be held by the Shah as the feudatory of the British Crown. This scheme, to which the Queen objected,

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with some reason, as unduly increasing British responsibilities, was never carried through.

To Queen Victoria.

HUGHENDEN, *Dec.* 5, 1879.—Lord Beaconsfield with his humble duty to yr. Majesty. With the utmost deference, he begs to assure yr. Majesty, that yr. Majesty's Ministers in any line, which they may advise yr. Majesty to take, about the Russian Letters,[1] will not in their opinion show weakness, but strength; strength in their cause, and confidence in the commanding position, which in this affair they occupy. Lord Beaconsfield does not contemplate eventual 'silence or concealment' in this matter. But the occasion, and the manner, require much consideration. Lord Cranbrook, on Wednesday, talked of further letters, in private to Lord Beaconsfield; but no information of that kind has reached him, and he has written in consequence to Lord Cranbrook on the subject.

And now with regard to the 'other, larger and more difficult subject.' Here are the views of Lord Beaconsfield personally and which he ventures to hope, that yr. Majesty, after consideration, may be pleased not to disapprove.

It is clear, that Lord Lytton would like to fall back on the Treaty of Gandamak, but feels that it is impossible; he therefore contemplates a group of quasi-independent chieftains under the influence of the imperial Crown of India, but combining this, for some time, with adequate military occupation of the country by yr. Majesty's forces. If this were effected, and Candahar, for example, in possession of yr. Majesty's army, and in two years' time connected by a railway with Herat, Lord Lytton would not be unwilling to see the Shah of Persia Lord of Herat, on the same terms as the chiefs of Candahar, Cabul, Ghuznee, etc. Such arrangements cannot be made off-hand.

Lord Salisbury, on the other hand, tho' not disapproving of this general policy, wishes to close with Persia at once, for the fear that Russia will forestall us. Lord Cranbrook, who from his office, as well as his character, naturally exercises much influence on this question, looks upon the disintegration of Afghanistan as inevitable, and is in favor, generally, of the Viceroy's views; but more strongly in favor of the Persian Convention than Lord Lytton, and wishes to hasten the general settlement of Afghanistan, so that we may meet Parliament with a distinct policy.

[1] Correspondence between Sher Ali and Russian agents, found at Cabul.

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After the Cabinet unanimously agreeing that the Treaty of Gandamak should be looked upon as abrogated, and that disintegration must be accepted as a fact by yr. Majesty's Government, Lord Beaconsfield guided the Cabinet to a decision on Wednesday which substantially adopted the views of Lord Cranbrook, but authorised Lord Salisbury to continue negotiating with Persia. It is the opinion of Lord Beaconsfield that Persia will wait; and so, that we may be able to effect a safer and more satisfactory arrangement, than the Shah now would propose or accept.

Russia can offer nothing at present to Persia. She can only menace, and she menaces while she herself is under great difficulties. We are now more at hand, as regards Persia, than Russia is. Russia could not move against Persia under two years, and then, with a railway from Candahar to Herat, your Majesty could immediately display a military power against which Russia could not contend. Lord Salisbury proposes, in his contemplated convention, many engagements on the part of Persia, which would practically make the Shah yr. Majesty's feudatory; not as Shah of Persia, but as Lord of Herat, as in the case of the K. of the Netherlands, who is a feudatory, it is believed, of the German Empire, as Grand Duke of Luxembourg.

Yr. Majesty justly enquires, What guarantees have we that the Shah will observe these conditions? The same guarantees that made him observe the Treaty of Paris for 30 years, and, in addition, the increased guarantee arising from his increased proximity to yr. Majesty's Empire, and its military resources, while the Persian Gulf is at all times open to your Majesty's Fleet.

Only one important step was actually taken in the process of disintegration. A chieftain, independent of Cabul, but under the protection of England, was set up in Candahar. Before any definite decision had been reached in the north, there appeared out of Turkestan a claimant to the Afghan throne, Abdul Rahman, nephew of Sher Ali. There was reason to think that he might prove the strong ruler who was desired; and negotiations had been begun with him when the Beaconsfield Government left office. Ministers had acquired for India an enormously strengthened frontier, and had beaten down, for the time, opposition in Afghanistan; the final settlement had to be left for their successors.

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The temporary disasters in South Africa and Afghanistan, however they might disaffect voters at home to Beaconsfield's Government, did not lead competent foreign observers to doubt England's power or the value of her goodwill. For in September of this year the friendly relations which had existed since the Treaty of Berlin between Great Britain and Germany culminated in what appeared to be a serious overture from Bismarck to Beaconsfield. He sent Münster, the German Ambassador in London, direct to Beaconsfield at Hughenden, to propose, confidentially and for the moment unofficially, a defensive alliance between Germany, Austria, and England. Beaconsfield, who insisted that the confidence should be extended to his Sovereign and his colleague, the Foreign Secretary, submitted to the Queen the following account of this important conversation; forwarding at the same time an almost verbally identical report to Salisbury.

Memorandum for Queen Victoria.

Secret. HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 27, 1879.—Count Münster arrived here yesterday at half-past six o'clock, and departed early this morning. . . . Absolutely before he sat down, he said, 'I disturb you in your retirement with reluctance, but I obey the order of Prince Bismarck, and I come to make you a proposal of the gravest character. It must be made, however, in complete confidence; not looked upon, at this stage, as an official communication, but one of private friendship of Prince Bismarck, with the hope that it may lead to official communication.' Then I said: 'I must stop you at once to say that, while I engage that the confidence shall be respected, it is impossible for me to listen to anything on public affairs, which I am not free to communicate to my Sovereign and the Secretary of State.'

Count Münster: 'Prince Bismarck feels that and knows that it is not possible, nor desirable, for you to converse with me except on those conditions; but why he insists, for the moment, that his confidence should be limited to yourself, is that he has not yet communicated his purpose to the Emperor, and if the Emperor hears of it from another quarter—we will say from royal correspondence or otherwise—before Prince Bismarck has told him—the result might be highly disadvantageous.'

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I, however, persisted in my view, saying that Lord Salisbury and myself were the same, and that, from long experience, I could answer with my head for the discretion of my Sovereign. After some demurring, Count Münster made his statement. It was long, but interesting. The principal points are thus condensed.

The relations of Russia and Germany are in their nature essentially unsatisfactory, and since the union of Germany have become more so. The Russians hate the Germans, and have succeeded, during late years, in removing almost every eminent German from their public service, altho' German statesmen really made this Empire. The Pan-Slavic sentiment now entirely absorbs them, and the reason why Schouvaloff is shelved is that, altho' a Russian, he is enlightened, and would follow the policy of the great Russo-German statesmen who preceded him.

This chronic state of affairs induced Prince Bismarck to make an effort to rid Germany of the Russian thraldom under which Germany has so long groaned, and to follow up the comparative emancipation which had been effected by the union of Germany. In this spirit, he made, at an early period of Lord Beaconsfield's administration, a proposal to Lord Odo Russell proposing an alliance with Gt. Britain. That proposal was not only rejected by the English Secretary of State, but was only notified by him to his colleagues accompanied by his opinion, that it could not for a moment be entertained. Had that proposal been accepted, there would have been no Turkish war, and none of the complications that now embarrass us. Thrown back on himself, Prince Bismarck was forced to rely on Russia, and by the invention of the alliance of the three Emperors, which was never realised, and by the reciprocal regard of the two Emperors of Germany and Russia, the Prince managed for a time to keep affairs tolerably straight.[1]

Now, all the old and organic rancor has reappeared. All the complaints of Germany having thrown over Russia, are false and mere pretexts. So also the pretended personal difference of Gortchakoff and Bismarck, and the articles in the Russian newspapers. What is true, is, that Pan-Slavism is entirely paramount in Russia, and that the Emperor of Russia has at last given in entirely to it. The meeting of the two Emperors, the other day, was an entire failure. The Emperor of Germany said and did many things on that occasion which his friends regretted, but the Emperor himself

[1] This, of course, was an audacious inversion of the order of events. The understanding between the three Emperors began in 1872; Bismarck's overtures to Odo Russell and Derby were made in 1876.

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is now convinced, that these sacrifices were in vain, and that his influence with his nephew has vanished.

Russia is preparing to attack Austria; the peace of the world will be disturbed; it is in the nature of things that it will not be a localised war; it will be a great and general war. Peace is necessary to Germany; no country desires or requires peace more. To secure it, she proposes an alliance between Germany, Austria and Great Britain. But before he mentions this to the Emperor, Prince Bismarck wishes to know from Lord Beaconsfield, whether he may consider England as favorable to such a scheme, as he does not wish to embark on fruitless negotiations, and, if Lord Beaconsfield does not favor the idea, he will proceed no further.

Lord Beaconsfield said he regretted the original proposition of P. Bismarck some years ago had been so abruptly dismissed. Had it been made the subject of negotiation, between the two Courts, it might have assumed a practical shape. He agreed with Prince Bismarck, that it probably would have prevented the war, but in considering the new proposal, tho' himself favorable, and always favorable, to an understanding with Germany, he could not conceal from himself, that any step on the part of Gt. Britain, that would seem hostile to France, might now be viewed with suspicion and dislike by the people of England, the commercial and social, and, in some degree, the political relations of the two countries being so intimate.

Count Münster said that Prince Bismarck had foreseen this; that the alliance he contemplated would not be incompatible with cordial relations with France; that their relations with France were of that description; and that the Prince had reason to believe, that neither the present French Ministry, nor Gambetta and his friends, would commence a war of aggression against Germany; that any danger of that kind could only come from the old clerical and monarchical parties, and that France under any circumstances would never stir if Gt. Britain and Germany were united.

The two leading features of such co-operation would naturally be, to guard Germany from such aggression, and to support in the Levant, and the East generally, the policy and interests of England.

The conversation had gone on now for an hour, when the gong conveniently sounded for dinner.

After that the conversation was resumed. Lord Beaconsfield said, that he had always been, and still was, favorable in public affairs to the principle of an alliance or good understanding with Germany, but much depended on the application of that principle, and it could not be satisfactorily

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carried into effect except with the Secretary of State. He should advise Count Münster to convey this his opinion to P. Bismarck, and ask his Highness's permission to place himself in personal communication with Lord Salisbury.

Ultimately Count Münster said he should write to Prince Bismarck to that effect; that it was too great and grave a business to be hurried; but that, probably, about the time Lord Salisbury had returned to England, Count Münster would have received a reply from the Chancellor.

The Queen in her reply took strongly the point which Beaconsfield had at once raised with Münster. Bismarck should certainly, Her Majesty thought, not be entirely discouraged, 'but we must not alienate France. . . . If we ally ourselves with Germany and Austria, France might join with Russia and Italy, which would be very serious.' Salisbury was disposed to think that, in then existing circumstances, we should have to aid Austria if she were attacked by Russia, whether we were allied, or not, to the Central Powers.

To Lord Salisbury.

HUGHENDEN, *Oct.* 1, 1879.—. . . What B.'s game may exactly be, I venture not to say, but, no doubt, he is a man who, if he have cards in his hand, will play them. The question is, whether, at this moment, his game is not ours?

There is a preponderant impression here, that the general policy of our Government may be good, but that we have been unskilful or unfortunate in managing its details, so that we have not adequately achieved our purpose.

That purpose, in the mind of the country, is the maintenance of our Empire, and hostility to Russia. Notwithstanding the general depression, a fear of Russia, as the Power that will ultimately strike at the root of our Empire, is singularly prevalent, and is felt even by those, who do not publicly, or loudly, express it. I believe that an alliance between the three Powers in question, at this moment, might probably be hailed with something like enthusiasm by the country. It would explain many passages, that are now ambiguous or unsatisfactory. They would, then, be treated as parts of one coherent whole. I will not use the poet's more ambitious epithet: I will leave that to the country.

The great difficulty, if we adopt this policy, is how to make it known. I carefully avoided using the word 'treaty' in my

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conversation with M[ünster]. Yet it might be worth considering, whether some treaty between the three Allies, not formally and avowedly for the great object, but with reference to some practical point connected with it, might not be expedient; but these matters are too vast and intricate to write about, and we shall soon meet. . . .

I would just observe, however, that supposing I am wrong in my assumption as to the effect of this alliance on the immediate opinion of England, and we retire from office, we shall retire as the representatives of a strong and intelligent policy, and the advantage of this will be felt by the Tory party hereafter.

I think you would gain nothing by pumping Waddington. We know what is in that well. Were it, otherwise, worth while to do so, you would gain nothing. France could not, in reason, object to our assisting Austria, if attacked by Russia; particularly if she remember the Tripartite Treaty. . . .

Presumably Bismarck was not satisfied with Beaconsfield's friendly but indecisive attitude. At any rate, Münster about a fortnight later had a general talk with Salisbury in the Foreign Office without making any reference to the proposal submitted at Hughenden. Beaconsfield was determined, very rightly, to explore the situation, and urged Salisbury himself to open the matter with Münster.

To Lord Salisbury.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Oct.* 14, 1879.—. . . What I would suggest for your consideration is, that you should see M. before his departure, and frankly open on the whole matter.

Make any use of my name you like, and throw any blame upon me, wh. may be expedient, as to my clumsiness in the negotiation.

We gain nothing by reserve, as it seems to me. If Bismarck sees, which it is desirable that he should see, that it is our determination, in the event of European complications, not to be neutral and non-interfering, but to act, and to act with allies, he will fear, what he does at present, probably, a little fear, that we should ally ourselves with France, and, it might be, Russia too. After he has once broken his mind to us and so confidentially as he has done, it is our interest, I think, to fathom the affair.

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From Lord Salisbury.

Confidential. HATFIELD, *Wednesday, Oct.* 15, '79.—Münster is here now, and I have had a long talk with him about our matter. . . .

I stated to him our view—that Austria's position in Europe was a matter in which we took deep interest, and considered essential: that, if Russia attacked Germany and Austria, Germany might rely on our being on her side. I said, 'I suppose the service you would want of us would be to influence France and Italy to observe neutrality.' He replied that was their object: that Metz and Strasburg made them tolerably safe from all attack on the south part of the frontier; but that they were open through Belgium, and they wished to feel confident that we should not tolerate an attack through Belgium. Of that, I said, he might feel confident; and I was pretty sure that we could prevent any French Government from joining Russia against him; but that he might rely on our goodwill and assistance in the contingency of an attack on Austria and Germany.

It was all very much in the sense and tone of his conversation with you: but it left the impression on my mind that since he had spoken to you there had been a slight change of mind: and that B. is not so keen now as then. . . .

Nothing further came from Berlin about the proposed triple alliance between Germany, Austria, and England. But on October 27 Karolyi, the Austrian Ambassador, announced to Salisbury the conclusion of the famous Austro-German Alliance, without any allusion to the possibility of including England as a third party. The memorandum which Salisbury drew up for the Queen shows the manner in which this covenant was originally represented by its framers.

Lord Salisbury to Queen Victoria:

Memorandum of interview on October 27, 1879, *between Lord Salisbury and Count Karolyi.*

Most Secret. The Austrian Ambassador formally announced to-day (though under pledge of the strictest secrecy) a defensive alliance between Germany and Austria. He said that its object was purely the maintenance of the general peace and of the state of things established by the Berlin Treaty. It had been proposed by Prince Bismarck to Count Andrassy: the

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Prince having become 'frightened' by the attitude of the Russian Government. The two Empires had agreed that for the little matters which still remained to be executed by the Berlin Treaty (chiefly questions of delimitation) they would observe a most conciliatory attitude, so long as Russia did the same: but if on them, or for any other causes, Russia were to attack either Empire, they had agreed to treat it as an attack on both of them. He insisted that it was an alliance having for its object the maintenance of peace and the *status quo:* that Austria having obtained Bosnia was satisfied and entertained no projects of *convoitise:* that if Turkey were to fall, an event which he did not affect to regard as very distant, Austria would neither desire to take her place, nor would suffer Russia to do so; but would do her best to strengthen the 'little States,' and the actual inhabitants, whoever they were, in their resistance to invasion. He concluded by saying that this communication had been made to England only; and that the two Empires earnestly hoped that it would be a gratifying one to your Majesty's Government.

Lord Salisbury replied that the intelligence would be received by your Majesty and the Cabinet with great gratification as they would see in it a pledge for European peace. He expressed a confidence that, if in the lapse of years the Turkish Empire should fall, the difficult questions arising out of that result would be settled only after an intimate consultation between the three Powers, and he asked whether the agreement was a written one. To this question Count Karolyi would give no direct answer: but only said that it was a 'serious engagement,' and if the events it provided against took place, it would be followed by acts.

He said that the German Emperor had been brought to approve of it with great difficulty and only after great pressure from Prince Bismarck. He concluded by repeating his exhortations to secrecy.

Probably the 'great gratification' which Salisbury expressed to Karolyi at the receipt of the news, and his public description of the mere rumour of it as 'glad tidings of great joy,' gave Bismarck all he wished. 'The German Empire in alliance with Austria,' Bismarck wrote to the King of Bavaria, 'would not lack the support of England.'[1] He had found it difficult enough to obtain the consent of his pro-Russian master, the German

[1] See Grant Robertson's *Bismarck*, p. 246.

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Emperor, to the Austrian treaty; he would have encountered still more opposition from him to the inclusion of England in it. Moreover, so long as England, at that time Russia's principal antagonist on the stage of the world, was omitted from the treaty, there was room for that 'reinsurance' with Russia which he always kept before his mind as desirable.

Bismarck's omission to prosecute his overture relieved the Cabinet from a difficulty. Both the Queen and Northcote, who was at this period Minister in attendance at Balmoral, felt very strongly the danger of alienating France. Her Majesty feared, she wrote, that Bismarck's proposal was meant 'to paralyse France as much as against Russia; and that we may be drawn into a trap.' Even Beaconsfield, though he considered that danger to be over-estimated, held that it was not unfortunate that the affair should have ended without forfeiting the sympathy either of the Central Powers or of France.

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING STREET, *Nov.* 5, 1879.—Lord Beaconsfield . . . duly received the letter of the Chancellor of the Exchequer expressing yr. Majesty's views on the subject of the alliance with Austria and Germany. . . .

When Count Münster left Hughenden, it was with the intention of communicating to Prince Bismarck the result of his conference with Lord Beaconsfield, and to ask the Prince's authority to speak on the subject to Lord Salisbury. Count Münster then calculated that he should receive an answer from Prince Bismarck in about a week or ten days. Whether the Prince was disappointed by the reserve shown on the general subject by Lord Beaconsfield, or was offended by Lord Beaconsfield insisting on immediate communication of the proposal to yr. Majesty and the Secretary of State, or whether some sudden change had taken place in the circumstances at Berlin, or whether Count Münster blundered from the first, or whatever the cause, the fact remains, that P. Bismarck never wrote to Count Münster and has never subsequently written to him, nor has the Prince seen Count Münster during his last visit to Germany; in fact, the Prince declined to see him. The secret note from Count Andrassy was a communication from Austria, not from Germany, and,

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though Count Münster, on Monday last, read a similar note to Lord Salisbury, the two identical notes only announced a defensive alliance between Austria and Germany, in no sense inviting, or soliciting, the adhesion of England.

This is all very strange, but, in Lord Beaconsfield's opinion, by no means unfortunate. It would have been a difficult, and even dangerous, affair to have altogether rejected the contemplated alliance; and, although from the interviews of M. Waddington and Lord Salisbury at Dieppe, an estrangement from France would not have, necessarily, occurred, still it would have been an event, which might have chilled the reciprocal feelings of yr. Majesty's Government and that of Paris. At present yr. Majesty is as free as air, and that, too, without showing any want of sympathy with the Austro-German views.[1] . . .

An hour was occupied [at the Cabinet yesterday] in discussing the question of dissolution. With one exception, every Minister was in favour of postponing the dissolution, provided no new tax were proposed. The Chancellor of the Exchequer observed silence, which Lord Beaconsfield will not describe as ominous. All, however, depends on his decision. If he will only do what Mr. Pitt did—what a humbler man, Lord Beaconsfield, did in 1858—and not attempt an artificial sinking fund in the teeth of new taxes, all would be right. The best way, however, with Sir Stafford is not to press him prematurely. He will have good advice from many quarters, and Lord Beaconsfield thinks will feel the impropriety of levying fresh taxation, when the industry of the country is only just recovering from almost unprecedented depression.

The Cabinet meets again to-day, the subject, Ireland. . . .

It was, no doubt, with recollections of this overture from Bismarck in his mind, that Beaconsfield vindicated, in the most striking passage of his Guildhall speech, England's place and high responsibility in the councils of Europe.

In assuming that peace will be maintained, I assume also that no Great Power would shrink from its responsibilities. If there be a country, for example, one of the most extensive and wealthiest of empires in the world—if that country, from a perverse interpretation of its insular geographical position, turns an indifferent ear to the feelings and the fortunes of Continental Europe, such a course would, I believe,

[1] 'We are well out of it' wrote the Queen in reply.

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only end in its becoming an object of general plunder. So long as the power and advice of England are felt in the councils of Europe, peace, I believe, will be maintained, and maintained for a long period. Without their presence, war, as has happened before, and too frequently of late, seems to me to be inevitable. I speak on this subject with confidence to the citizens of London, because I know that they are men who are not ashamed of the Empire which their ancestors created; because I know that they are not ashamed of the noblest of human sentiments, now decried by philosophers—the sentiment of patriotism; because I know they will not be beguiled into believing that in maintaining their Empire they may forfeit their liberties. One of the greatest of Romans, when asked what were his politics, replied, *Imperium et Libertas*. That would not make a bad programme for a British Ministry. It is one from which Her Majesty's advisers do not shrink.

In this speech Beaconsfield had the satisfaction of being able to congratulate the City on the signs of a revival in trade, after a depression which had lasted nearly as long as his Government. With his customary shrewdness he singled out for notice, 'as significant of the general prosperity of commerce,' the manufacture of chemicals, an industry which, he said, was then so active that it was difficult to execute the orders which were pouring in. The laughter and scorn, with which contemporary critics greeted this selection of an apparently obscure trade as typical, appear very foolish now, when chemists and chemistry are universally recognised as dominating manufacture.

But, though Beaconsfield could point to a revival of commerce, he said nothing, as there was no cheering news to give, about agriculture, an industry which touched him more nearly. T. E. Kebbel has truly said that the landed interest of England was, to the day of Beaconsfield's death, 'the object of his devotion; and on it he constantly maintained that the greatness of England had been reared.' What was its condition now? 'No one,' he had said in Parliament in the spring of this year,[1] 'can deny that the depression of the agricultural interest

[1] March 28.

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is excessive. 'Though I can recall several periods of suffering, none of them have ever equalled the present in its intenseness. . . . The remarkable feature of the present agricultural depression is this—that the agricultural interest is suffering from a succession of bad harvests, and that these bad harvests are accompanied for the first time by extremely low prices. . . . In old days, when we had a bad harvest, we had also the somewhat dismal compensation of higher prices. That is not the condition of the present; on the contrary the harvests are bad, and the prices are lower.' This was because of the foreign competition which was the inevitable result of Peel's action in 1846. 'The immense importations of foreign agricultural produce have been vastly in excess of what the increased demands of our population actually require. And that is why such low prices are maintained.'

There had consequently arisen from the agricultural interest loud demands for the removal of the burdens on real property, for reciprocity, and finally for full-blown Protection; and landlords and farmers naturally quoted in favour of these policies what Beaconsfield called in the House of Lords 'speeches which I myself made, in another place, and in another generation,' 'rusty phrases of mine forty years ago.' In two speeches in Parliament, on March 28 and April 29, Beaconsfield explained why none of the suggested remedies could now be adopted. The first policy, the relief of the burdens on real property, had largely been carried out under his own Government: the rates had been relieved of pauper lunatics, registration, police, and prisons. No serious relief for land could be obtained from further readjustment. As for reciprocity, when he himself advocated it, there were elements on which treaties of reciprocity could be negotiated. Now there were none.

At that time, although the great changes of Sir Robert Peel had taken place, there were 168 articles in the tariff which were materials by which you could have negotiated, if that was a wise and desirable policy, commercial treaties of

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reciprocity. What is the number you now have in the tariff? Twenty-two. Those who talk of negotiating treaties of reciprocity—have they the materials for negotiating treaties of reciprocity? You have lost the opportunity. I do not want to enter into the argument, at the present moment, whether this was wise or not; but the policy which was long ago abandoned you cannot resume.

Reciprocity, whatever its merits, was dead. England had lost the power of building up a reciprocal system of commercial treaties.

Still less could general Protection be resumed. A whole session had been devoted to the discussion before the Corn Laws were repealed. The distress which followed repeal kept the controversy alive for several years, but all efforts to obtain from the constituencies a verdict in favour of the reversal of the policy of 1846 failed. 'Under these circumstances it was impossible for public men, whatever might have been their opinions upon these great commercial questions when these important changes were first introduced, to have had an open controversy for a quarter of a century. The Government of the country could not have been carried on. It was necessary to bow to the decision of Parliament and the country, expressed by its representatives in both Houses, and ultimately by an appeal to the whole nation itself.' In other words, Protection, like reciprocity, was, for the Victorian epoch, dead; and practical statesmen would not waste time in discussing its virtues. But it must be supposed that Beaconsfield was still of opinion that Protection, if practicable, would have been the only policy to restore the landed interest, as he appeared to be bankrupt of other ideas on the question. He certainly propounded no remedy of his own for the woeful state of agriculture, except a vague reliance upon 'the energy of this country.' He was not disposed in April even to grant a Royal Commission, but subsequent debates in the House of Commons caused him to change his mind, and such a Commission was appointed at the end of the session under the chairmanship of the Duke of Richmond.

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As the Tory leader had no specific, the Radicals were the more emboldened to press for revision of the land laws in the direction of eliminating landowners and setting up peasant proprietors in their place. And even the Whig Hartington said that, if Mr. Chaplin and his friends had made out their case, the land system of England had broken down—that unique system under which 'the cultivation of the soil is carried on by a class of men who are not the owners of the soil, and who are not the actual cultivators of the soil.' Beaconsfield at once rallied to the defence of that ordered scheme of country life, landlord, farmer, and labourer, which he admired: and evolved a noteworthy theory about the three profits necessarily derived from the land. This he propounded to the world in his speech at the Mansion House at the close of the session. Here is the crucial passage.

Look at the peasant proprietor. The peasant buys a farm, ten, fifteen, or twenty acres, and pays for it out of his earnings previously invested in the public funds of his country, or, as is often the case, with money borrowed from a banker in his neighbourhood. The interest paid to the banker, or that which represents what the peasant derived from his previous investment, is the first income of the soil, and may be said to represent rent. Then the peasant proprietor has to stock his farm and to supply the machinery which is to cultivate the soil. He has to buy, if not a plough, many spades, barrows, and other instruments; he has to build a cart, purchase a horse, whose manure is necessary for the due cultivation of the soil; he has to raise some building, however modest; a barn, at least a shed. All this floating capital and its wear and tear demand and receive the second income from the soil, and represent the farmer's return. Having purchased his farm and then stocked it, the peasant proprietor, and probably his sons, proceed to cultivate the soil, and during their labours they must be fed and clothed, and nurtured and lodged, and that is an income which in this country we should call wages. But it is the third income which the land is obliged to produce under the tenure of peasant proprietorship. I wish it then to be impressed on the sense of this nation that the three incomes which land must, under any circumstances, produce are in England distributed among three classes, and on the land where peasant proprietorship prevails they are

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devoted only to one class. The number and variety of classes in England dependent on land are sources of our strength. They have given us the proprietors of the soil, the constructors of our liberty in a great degree, and the best security for local government; they have given us the farmers, who cultivate and improve their estates, and lastly the agricultural peasant, whose lot is deplored by those not acquainted with it, but who has during the last forty years made more continuous progress than any other class in Her Majesty's dominions.

Beaconsfield developed this ingenious, if somewhat fanciful, theme in a long speech which he made on September 18, after his frequent autumnal custom, to his county Agricultural Association at Aylesbury. The occasion weighed heavily on him in prospect, as he told Lady Bradford on September 2: 'I have another affair hanging over me, which horribly distresses and depresses me; to be President, in about a fortnight, of the Royal Bucks Agricultural Association; at all times a painful effort, but at this moment, so critical in the agricultural world, entailing on me more thought and labor than if I had to bring forward a great measure in Parliament.' He would not admit, he said, that the agricultural system of England had broken down. There was distress, but not decadence. He maintained that the distribution of the three profits from the land gave us three valuable classes on the land instead of one; and quoted statistics to show that production per acre in England under the triple system was double that of France under the system of peasant proprietors. He discussed the uncertain conditions of transatlantic competition with a view of discouraging precipitate action; at home, moreover, bad harvests would before long be replaced by good ones. But there was ample reason for rent reduction by landlords, who he was sure would be ready to stand by their farmers. Then full use should be made of his own Agricultural Holdings Act, which secured compensation to the farmer for unexhausted improvements. Finally he bade his country hearers beware of Cockney agitators sent out by the party which always viewed the agricul-

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tural interest with hostility. 'But a year ago, they were setting the agricultural labourers against the farmers; now they are attempting to set the farmers against the landlords.' These men were opposed to our 'free and aristocratic government. You may get rid of that government, gentlemen; but if you do you will have either a despotism that ends in democracy, or a democracy that ends in despotism.'

Patience, liberal reductions of rent, compensation for tenants' unexhausted improvements—these constituted Beaconsfield's prescription for the immediate trouble. He had manifested his own belief in the future of agricultural property by adding at this season to his Hughenden estate; but his letters show the straits to which his friends among the big landlords were driven.

To Lady Bradford.

10, DOWNING STREET, *Oct.* 7.—I hope you have won the race,[1] wh. is possible, as they say 'everybody has his turn,' tho' I have heard the apophthegm in coarser tongue.

They say now, however, as the consequence of the landed break-up, that there are to be no more turf, and no more London seasons. All our friends have shut up their houses, or are to do so. It will be an excuse for some, who ought to have done so under any circumstances.

There is no doubt of one; Burghley! But this, I think, must be her ladyship's temper as much as his l[ordshi]p's ruin. A good many more were mentioned at the Council yesterday, but I have forgotten them, so I hope they may not be true.

To my surprise, how[eve]r, your friend Duke of R[ichmond] and G[ordon], who throughout has been quite sceptical of smash, announced that his news, from Sussex, was the very worst, and that his men, with leases, were throwing up! I am sorry for the country, still more for him, whom I like. . . . For myself, I could live in a garret provided it was well white-washed, and very clean.

I came up yesterday early to see S[alisbury], a very long conference, and then Cab., still longer—and now I am returning, in 10 mins., to H[ughenden] with[ou]t any news from Cabul. It looks as if there had been, or rather was, a battle, for they may be still fighting. So much the better. . . .

[1] The Cesarewitch, which was won by Lord Bradford's horse, Chippendale.

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HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Oct.* 9.—I smelt gunpowder in my last letter, and it has come.[1] I wish Roberts had more force. It is clear that, from the first, we have suffered from want of transport, and, tho' there are troops eno', they are still at too great a distance.

However, I will only think of yr. own victory, which is very triumphant. I wrote a line of congratulation to Bradford yesterday, who, being Master of the Horse, deserves to win. My household is much excited by the event. I suspect B.'s valet must have 'put them on.' I fear they are all on the turf—even Mr. Baum.

The peacocks are beginning to get proud again, their tails developing as the leaves fall. . .

The Aylesbury and Guildhall speeches were Beaconsfield's only contributions to the oratory of the autumn. But in view of the fact that the Parliament had completed six out of a possible seven sessions and that therefore dissolution could not be far distant, the outpouring this year was immense on both sides. All other efforts, however, paled beside Gladstone's Midlothian 'pilgrimage of passion,' with its herculean programme, its undiscriminating denunciation of the Beaconsfield Government and all their works, its arrogant claim to be fighting the battle of 'justice, humanity, freedom, law'[2] against the powers of darkness. This outburst, which occupied the last week of November and the first week of December, did not disturb Beaconsfield's autumn routine of incessant work at Hughenden and in London, varied by an occasional visit for a day or two to friends. At the close of Gladstone's campaign he wrote to Cranbrook: 'It certainly is a relief that this drenching rhetoric has at length ceased; but I have never read a word of it. *Satis eloquentiæ, sapientiæ parum.*'

To Lady Bradford.

HATFIELD HOUSE, *Nov.* 1.—. . . I believe the only foundation for the sudden surmise of a dissolution was Willie Dyke paying his annual visit to Hughenden, and Charley Carington,

[1] The Battle of Charasiab.

[2] Quoted from Gladstone's Diary for December 28, 1879. Morley's *Gladstone*, Book XII., ch. 6.

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that genius, immediately telegraphing to Sir Wm. Harcourt that all was arranged, and dissolution instant. I have heard no single valid reason why a loyal Parliament shd. be submitted to such an injury and insult as a reward for their faithful services and support. . . .

10, DOWNING STREET, *Nov.* 5.—As you say, a heavy, a very heavy week. I'd be very glad were it as short as that. Cabs. every day. I have just come up from the Cabt. and was told that poor Schou[valoff], who called on me yesterday to say farewell, was waiting for me in the reception room. He is recalled, and alas! not to be Minister or anything: his successor Prince Lobanoff. . . .

This is incoherent; as Schou. said, 'You are breathless and exhausted with your Cabinet; so I will be short.'

Nov. 9.—. . . The City dinner to-morrow is always an exhausting affair, and I am sorry to say I am not free from my old foe. It always attacks me about this time, and after two months of health, I began to think I was immortal. I feel very much the reverse at this moment. . . .

To Anne Lady Chesterfield.

10, DOWNING STREET, *Nov.* 13, '79.—I am very sorry about your dog. I have a collie of Monty's standing on his hind legs, and begging to be noticed, by me at this very moment. His shaggy coat is beautiful in texture and color, and his eyes like precious stones, yet full of intelligence and humanity: a most sensible and agreeable companion. But then they die too soon, and, in their youth, are apt to meet mischances like yours. Distemper is a terrible mystery. I had a collie once, who suffered terribly, but I saved his life by frequent, but very slight, doses of port wine, recommended by a vet. at Beaconsfield.

The dinner at the Guildhall was very successful. It was the most crowded banquet that Gog and Magog ever looked down upon. . . .

To Lady Bradford.

10, DOWNING STREET, *Nov.* 16, '79.—. . . We seem to be in for a premature hard black frost, and I cannot venture out, but I am pretty well. . . .

Of course, you know they expelled Labouchere from the B[eef]steak Club. I doubt the justice of the Committee and their friends in this particular instance, but they did rightly in seizing an occasion to show the disgust of society at the originator of what are called 'society' papers. There is no excuse for Labouchere. Born with, or to, every advantage, good abilities, large fortune, first-rate education, a member

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of an illustrious profession, and, while quite young, member for the metrop. county, he sacrifices England for Bohemia, and lives with bravoes and ruffians, whose natural business it is to poison society. . . .

Nov. 24.—I am writing to you by candlelight, and so it has been for these days past; with no change, except to-day, they say, there is a dreary thaw, and that the hard black frost has gone, or is going. . . .

Schou. luncheoned here, I think on Friday. . . . I have succeeded in getting him his farewell audience for Thursday next, for wh. he seems greatly obliged to me. I hope the Queen may invite him to dine. After all, he is the only Russian who at least pretends to be our friend, and his disgrace at his own Court is attributable to his supposed friendliness to this country. Really it means his friendship to peace and common sense, neither of wh. are popular at St. Petersburg.

I offered Henry Lennox the Deputy Governorship of the New Forest, wh. half the world is candidate for. All my colleagues, to whom I broke my intention, protested against my madness in so doing. Will you believe it, that Henry declined the post, and also, if it became vacant, a Commissionership of Customs, wh. he understood I was reserving for him. He will not leave the House of Commons, or take anything but a high post: he absolutely intimated the Cabinet!! Don't say anything about this. . . .

Nov. 26.—I am now going to have my audience at Windsor —at ½ past two, tho' our Sovereign does not arrive until betn. 9 and 10 this morning! What nerve! what muscle! what energy! Her Minister is very deficient in all three. The fogs and frosts of this harsh November have terribly knocked me down. . . .

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Nov.* 28.—. . . You are quite right. I have not read a single line of all this row,[1] but Monty has told me something, and has promised me to make notes, in case it fall to my lot to notice his wearisome rhetoric. What a waste of powder and shot! Because all this was planned on the wild assumption, that Parlt. was going to be dissolved, whereas, as Sir George Bowyer, apparently from authority, has just informed the world, Parlt. will probably not be dissolved till the year after next. . . . Monty is of great use to me, and therefore goes off to-morrow! Such is life. . . .

Nov. 29.—. . . I have had not a moment to look at the papers to-day, save glancing at *The Times:* most amused at their quoting my description of the oratory of the Impetuous Hypocrite, wh., when it was first uttered, they disapproved!

[1] Gladstone's Midlothian campaign.

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Dec. 1.—. . . There is a Cabinet on Wednesday. . . . Awful to go up, and return, in this dreadful weather; the snow now falling fast, and the frost continuing. . . .

Poor Roebuck gone! His Privy Councillorship made his last hours tranquil, if not content. Never was such an unsuccessful career except poor Joseph Hume's, who, tho' he was perpetually making, or saving, Ministries, was not even made a P. Councillor. I was more generous.

Dec. 8.—Your letters are most agreeable to me, and tho' they are not a compensation for yr. society at Crichel, wh. I shall probably never see again, they are a solace.

My visits there, and at most places, are rather artificial. I always feel there is nothing in common between me and the other guests, and tho' in theory we are living, when you are a guest, under the same roof, in practice our companionship is very slight. A forced walk in the morning at a disagreeable hour, always necessarily short, and then come carriages, in wh. I never enter, and wh. you always do—and must always do—and I am alone, while you are luncheoning with sporting heroes I think, therefore, I shall never leave my own roof again: no one can be offended, for, unless there is a change, wh. it is difficult to foresee, I have told the Faery the same thing, and will not go now even to Windsor, tho' I believe from the top of my highest hill the Castle is in sight.

I read a despatch yesterday from Odo Russ[ell], very curious: not a private letter to Ld. S[alisbury], but a regular despatch, 'very confidential.' It gives an account of a very confidential conversation with Cte. St. Vallier, the French Ambassador at Berlin, as to his recent visit to Bismarck at Varzin.

He found the great man in much better health than the newspapers report, 'reading over again all Lord Beaconsfield's novels.' He told St. Vallier that a first-rate work of fiction was the only thing that gave him distraction; that riding, shooting, farming, planting, and hunting, even wolves and wild boars, he still was thinking of politics; but with a fine novel, he was quite lost.

He said he had never written works of fiction, because he cd. not do two things at the same time; that all the *creative* power that he had, he gave to politics, otherwise he shd. probably write novels; and he said a good deal more. He was very frank and satisfactory, according to St. Vallier, as to general politics.

Wnat Bismarck says as to writing fiction is perfectly true. I have told you the same thing. I never cd. do two things at the same time; at least 2 wh. required the creative power.

When I was made Leader of the Opposition, I was obliged

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to leave off writing; from *Tancred*, my last then, to *Lothair* 23 years, and from *Loth*. nine years, being a Minister.

Dec. 17.—. . . Visit to the Faery very agreeable. It was a perpetual audience, and, at last, daughters tapped at the door at ½ to 9 before dinner to break up the charming flow. . . .

Once more Beaconsfield spent a solitary Christmas at Hughenden, waiting for news of Roberts, whom a sudden rising of the tribes had beleaguered at Sherpur, near Cabul. He was not well. 'The fact is,' he told Lady Bradford, 'I have scarcely been out of the house for six weeks, in order to save my chest, and have knocked up one's nervous system a little in consequence.' Happily his anxiety was relieved by Indian telegrams on December 28. 'I believe,' he told his friend, 'the smash of the enemy is complete, nor do I think they will again rally. I expect to meet Parliament, both as regards Asia and Africa, with a clean bill of health.' Accordingly he began the new year in fair spirits and, he told the Queen, in better health owing to the quiet life which he had led.

To Lady Bradford.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Jan.* 1, '80.—I hate anniversaries as much as you do: but you wd. be amused with the various 'kind wishes' I have received this morning. I won't dwell on Sandringham, or Bruxelles, tho' one was a Princess, and the other a Queen, but I think you would be diverted by one from the Prince of Bagdad, my 'devoted, tho' distant, admirer.' I remember him in this country, when he made one of those civilising visits the Orientals are fond of.

Osborne has sent me, as an *étrenne*, a most beautiful book, so rich in illustrations of the Teutonic, Italian, and English schools of art that, I am sure, it will occupy and delight you on your next visit here.

Our news is very good this morning from the seat of war. Baker has returned from a successful expedition, and the ascertained loss of the enemy on the 23-4 was 3,000: ours not half 300. There has been nothing like it in point of numbers since Agincourt.

After the visit of the Prince of Wales to Hughenden, Beaconsfield went up to town to prepare for the opening of Parliament, and, in spite of his indifferent health,

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resumed his practice of dining out. Perhaps as the result, he was once more confined to his room by illness —a misfortune which he shared with Salisbury and other important colleagues.

To Lady Bradford.

10, DOWNING ST., *Jan.* 19.—As you have seen, business is very pressing: Cabinets every day since I came up, and we only do not meet in the morning, because the expected Indian mail has not yet arrived. . . . I dined on Saturday at Gloucester House—a royal party, but very agreeable, and a first-rate dinner, wh. even Prince Hal, very curious in such matters, noticed with much praise. The Tecks were there: Princess Louise to whom the dinner was given. . . .

Yesterday I dined at Stafford House: a dinner also given to Pss. L[ouise]—a farewell one, as she departs[1] on Wedy. . . . P. Hal was there, but no other royalties, but a miscellaneous and an æsthetical crew, to interest and amuse the Queen of Canada. . . .

Jan. 23.—. . . I have not been out since Monday, and been obliged to ask Dr. Kidd to call on me, which is a bore. The worst is that Salisbury has knocked up; and in the very heat and crisis of affairs, with daily Cabinets, Queen's Speeches and new Russian Ambassadors, is ordered not to attend to business; a feverish attack, which always frightens one. . . . Don't say anything to the world about Salisbury, as the enemy will triumph. . . .

Jan. 25.—. . . Lady Salisbury writes a better acc[oun]t of her husband. The fever much diminished, and nearly gone, but very weak. We have a Cab. to-morrow, the second he cannot attend, at a time, too, when I most want him.

(*In pencil*). *Thursday* [*Jan.* 29].—I am unable to move; Salisbury is confined to his room at Hatfield, and must do no work; the Ld. Chancellor, attacked by asthma for the first time, was so frightened that he rushed to Bournemouth, where he found the fog blacker than here; the Chr. of the Exchequer is in bed with influenza; Sandon is at Liverpool;[2] where John Manners' broken bones are I hardly know. But if there had been a Cabinet to-day, *six* wd. have been absent. . . .

Feb. 5.—. . . I was obliged to give up any share in the ceremony,[3] wh. with the dinner of yesterday and the debate of this evening was beyond my physical powers. So the

[1] For Canada.
[2] Where there was a by-election in progress.
[3] Of the opening of Parliament by the Queen.

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sword of state was carried by yr. friend the Duke of R. and G., and the D. of Northumberland was consoled by [? for] his never having anything to do, by bearing the Crown—rather a weighty and difficult office. . . .

I hope to be in my place in H. of L. in two hours' time, but I have not yet put on a boot, and am as shaky as a man can be, who has been shut up for two weeks.

Feb. 6.—. . . I had great difficulty in speaking last night, and what I did say I said very badly. . . .

Altogether an ill-omened beginning for the final session of the 1874 Parliament.

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CHAPTER XIV.

Dissolution and Defeat.

1880.

When Ministers met Parliament, they had come to no conclusion as to the date of dissolution. The choice lay between the spring and the autumn; and their disposition, in which their chief concurred, was on the whole to allow the Parliament to run its course, and hold the elections in the autumn. A dissolution in the spring was hardly even possible until certain measures had been passed to relieve distress in Ireland. Once more the affairs of that unhappy country, which had dominated the General Election of 1868 and the Parliament then elected, but which had occupied a more moderate share of Ministerial and Parliamentary attention since 1874, forced themselves insistently upon the Cabinet, though they had by no means as yet similarly affected the public mind.

Froude has blamed Disraeli for not seizing in 1874 'the opportunity to reorganise the internal government of Ireland.' He suggests that the land question might have been adjusted on equitable lines, the authority of the law restored, nationalist visions extinguished, and a permanent settlement arrived at, but he gives us no clue to the scheme by which these desirable results might have been achieved. Froude's is a perverse judgment, which takes no account of the conditions in which Disraeli was called to power. One of the causes which produced the Conservative majority was resentment at the disproportionate preoccupation of Government and Parliament with Ireland. The desire and intention of the electorate were to give heroic legislation a pause, and to proceed with

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social reform. Gladstone had passed two great and revolutionary Irish measures, the Church Act and the Land Act, which, with a University Bill still to be passed, were to bring appeasement to a distracted country. Disraeli had not agreed with the policy of these measures; but they were now in force, and it was the obvious duty of his Government to give them time to work and to produce all the healing effects of which they were capable, while maintaining the authority of the law and assisting social improvement. Such was the policy of Abercorn and Hicks Beach, Disraeli's first Lord-Lieutenant and Chief Secretary—a policy continued by their successors, Marlborough and James Lowther. They even succeeded in completing Gladstone's original scheme by passing in 1879, in addition to other educational measures, a University Act, which went a considerable way to meet the demands of Irish Roman Catholics for University privileges; and they administered the law with courage, and on the whole with success. Though these proceedings hardly fulfilled Disraeli's expressed hope of governing Ireland 'according to the policy of Charles I. and not of Oliver Cromwell,' their aim was distinctly ameliorative; and perhaps the amelioration might have been quickened, had he been able to carry out the intention of visiting Ireland in person, which he had so much at heart in the first recess after his return to office in 1874.

Gladstone's legislation failed to effect its object, as Disraeli had said from the first that it was bound to fail. Instead of appeasing Irish discontent, it revived the old Repeal movement in a new guise. Beginning as a constitutional agitation in which all might well join, the movement gradually took on a revolutionary form, as its guidance fell more and more under the direction of Parnell, acting on parallel lines with Davitt, a Fenian convict on ticket of leave. The failure of the harvests in Ireland, as in England, gave the agitators a dangerous leverage on which to act. Obstruction in the House of Commons, and in Ireland the withholding of rent—the

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only interest in the land left by the Act of 1871 to the Irish landlord—were creating in the autumn of 1879 a dangerous situation, which was temporarily relieved by a few judicious arrests. Beaconsfield, there is reason to believe, was prepared to consider some sort of Federal Constitution for Ireland—'your damnable, delightful country,' as he called it in talking with David Plunket. But, along with all British statesmen of his day, including even the Gladstone of that epoch, he was profoundly convinced that the United Kingdom, as the heart of the Empire, must be preserved intact, and therefore strongly resisted an agitation which in his opinion must, if successful, result in separation.

To cope, however, with the real distress produced by a succession of bad harvests, he and the Irish Government promoted immediate relief legislation, which should meet the many cases of undeserved misfortune not provided for by a great voluntary fund organised in Ireland under the direction of the Duchess of Marlborough, the Lord-Lieutenant's wife. He was resolved to prevent the possibility of the recurrence of such a calamity as befell Ireland in 1848. Other Irish measures which were under discussion in the Cabinet during the winter, but on which no final decision had been taken, were the placing of the surplus from the Disestablished Church Fund in the hands of Commissioners as a Reproductive Loan Fund, and the expansion of the Purchase Clauses of the Land Act. The relief Bills, in spite of the benefits conferred by them on suffering Irish agriculturists, were at once and persistently obstructed by Parnellite members; and this factious spirit threatened to make the continuance of the Parliament impossible. But Ministers were at first still loth to precipitate dissolution. Beaconsfield's correspondence with the Queen shows what considerations were uppermost in his and their minds. The Queen feared, she wrote, that the Irish Home Rule members would make it impossible to go on with the Session. But would they be better in another Parliament?

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From Queen Victoria.

OSBORNE, *Feb.* 12, 1880.—. . . Ought you not to come to some agreement with some of the sensible, and reasonable and not violent men on the other side, to put a stop to what clearly is a determination to force the disruption of the British Empire? It is a serious Constitutional question. Can the Queen personally do anything to facilitate matters?

To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING STREET, *Feb.* 13, 1880.—. . . Even if it were advisable to dissolve Parliament, that is not so easy a process as seems upon the surface.

Yr. Majesty's Govt. might fairly hold, that the conduct of the Opposition exempts yr. Majesty's Ministers from the pledges, which they have given, to pass several measures of urgency—such as the 'Corrupt Practices Bill,' the 'Vacant Seats in the H. of Commons Bill'—before they advise yr. Majesty to empower them to go to the country. But even with this justifiable disregard of their engagements Parliament could not be dissolved without arranging the finances of the country, and passing the Mutiny Act, and this would place it in the power of the Opposition, greatly to delay the dissolution. . . .

Lord Beaconsfield believes that the time may come, when the interposition and personal influence of yr. Majesty may most beneficially be exercised in bringing about a more satisfactory state of the H. of Commons than now prevails. But Lord Beaconsfield fears, that nothing can be effected in this vein, until there is a new Parliament. There are no 'sensible and reasonable, and really not violent men' in the ranks of the Opposition on whom your Majesty might now act. The nominal leaders have no authority; and the mass, chiefly under the guidance and authority, or rather inspiration, of Mr. Gladstone, who avoids the responsibility of his position, are animated by an avidity for office such as Lord Beaconsfield, after more than forty years' experience, cannot recall.

Whether yr. Majesty's present Ministers have a majority at the impending election, or whether they have to cross the House, yr. Majesty's interposition might be equally efficacious, and the leading men of both parties would, then, be more free to carry your Majesty's patriotic intentions into effect.

Feb. 14.—. . . The Cabinet to-day considered the question of dissolution in all its forms and contingencies. They unanimously agreed, that nothing but a very critical state

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of affairs, such as menaced during the first week of the session, could authorise such a step, as it would justly be reproached to them, that, if dissolution were desired, it should have occurred in the late autumn. If however the factious spirit were continued, or revived, then they would recommend yr. Majesty to appeal to your people at all risks.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer was in good heart, and said, tho' his plan was not yet strictly matured, it was his intention to make a financial proposition which would involve no additional taxation. This declaration on his part will be worth more than, even, the elections at Liverpool and the Borough. . . .

Feb. 21.—. . . The debate in the House of Lords last night, it is to be hoped, will finish discussions on Afghanistan, until new events and circumstances happen and occur. The Duke of Argyll made a most able review of matters on which the House of Lords had long ago decided. Lord Beaconsfield endeavored to put an intelligible issue to the country. The intrigues of Russia determined yr. Majesty's Govt. to secure the gates of India. They have accomplished their purpose. Their policy has never changed, and the unsatisfactory accidents that have occurred have nothing to do with that policy, but are those casualties, which are inseparable from human affairs.

The state of business last night in the House of Commons augurs important events. The Chancellor of the Exchequer gave notice of the intention of yr. Majesty's Govt. to grapple with the Obstructionists. . . .

Thus, in spite of Ministers' hesitation, the prevalence of faction in Parliament, which had obliged them at once to strengthen the Speaker's hands to deal with it, was bringing their minds round to contemplate the advisability of an immediate dissolution. Other considerations pointed in the same direction. Urgent legislative necessities were met by the passage of the Irish relief Bills into law early in March. But, in the face of faction, it would be difficult to secure the renewal of the Peace Preservation Act, just about to expire. And yet that, without such a renewal, Ireland, in the throes of an anti-rent agitation, would be ungovernable, Beaconsfield and the Irish Government were well assured, and the measure was drafted. An immediate dissolution would provide a new Parliament, fresh from contact with the people's

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will, in sufficient time to deal with this imperative matter. In another respect dissolution would relieve the situation in the House of Commons, as a Home Office scheme for the purchase of the London Water Companies had met there with severe criticism on account of its apparently excessive generosity to existing shareholders. After Roberts's victories in Afghanistan, there was no serious difficulty in imperial or foreign affairs to stand in the way; and the recent revival of trade had put the business community in a better position to sustain the necessary disturbance of a General Election.

The electoral omens, moreover, seemed to be good. During the years of crisis in foreign affairs the Government had lost on balance some seats in the by-elections; but the House of Commons had supported them unswervingly, both moderate Liberals and Irish Home Rulers being often found in the Ministerial lobby; and three recent elections had suggested that the period of danger had passed. At Sheffield in December the Liberals had only retained by a small majority the seat to which Roebuck, who supported Ministers in foreign affairs, had been originally elected as a Radical. At Liverpool in February a Conservative held the seat by a majority of 2,000 in spite of a large Irish vote which was captured by the popular Liberal candidate on a Home Rule platform. And at Southwark in the same month a barrister, then unknown to political life, but whose eloquence and character must have won him many friends and votes—now Sir Edward Clarke, K.C.—captured for the Conservatives, contrary to all expectation, a seat with a long Liberal history.

If Government stood well with typical urban constituencies in Yorkshire, Lancashire, and London, there seemed no reason to hesitate; and accordingly at a Cabinet on March 6, held in Arlington Street on account of Lord Salisbury's illness, the fateful decision was taken to dissolve as soon as current business could be wound up.

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To Queen Victoria.

10, DOWNING STREET, *March* 6, 1880.—Lord Beaconsfield with his humble duty to your Majesty:

The Cabinet, just concluded, sate two hours and a half, and every member of it was requested to give his opinion: the members of the House of Commons having the priority.

There were various views, and some differences of opinion, but the ultimate result was unanimity.

The question, after exhausting arguments, really resolved itself to this: whether your Majesty should be advised to dissolve Parliament now, or in the late autumn.

The latter alternative was thought to involve too many risks; and perhaps was altogether impracticable, for the excitement of the existing House of Commons could hardly be restrained till that later period.

There is some difficulty about the day of dissolution, in consequence of the embarrassments of Easter,[1] and the hallowed claims of Passion Week. Your Majesty's visit to Baden may without difficulty be protracted, but your Majesty might perhaps graciously deign to consider the day of your Majesty's departure.

Lord Cranbrook, who will have the privilege of attending your Majesty this evening, will explain these matters, which now might weary your Majesty.

The Cabinet was held at Lord Salisbury's house, who looked better.

The announcement was made in both Houses on Monday, March 8, and next morning there appeared a manifesto from the Prime Minister, in the shape of a letter to the Lord-Lieutenant, in which he endeavoured to focus the attention of the electorate on the question of Ireland, and the dangers involved in the furious agitation there in progress. It will be remembered that at that period it was still held to be unconstitutional for peers to take any part in elections; and therefore it was only in some such indirect fashion as Beaconsfield adopted that the Prime Minister, if a peer, could appeal to the constituencies to support his Government.

To the Duke of Marlborough.

10, DOWNING STREET, *March* 8, 1880.—The measures respecting the state of Ireland, which Her Majesty's Govern-

[1] March 28.

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ment so anxiously considered with your Excellency, and in which they were much aided by your advice and authority, are now about to be submitted for the Royal Assent, and it is at length in the power of the Ministers to advise the Queen to recur to the sense of her people. The arts of agitators, which represented that England, instead of being the generous and sympathising friend, was indifferent to the dangers and the sufferings of Ireland, have been defeated by the measures, at once liberal and prudent, which Parliament has almost unanimously sanctioned.

During the six years of the present Administration the improvement of Ireland and the content of our fellow-countrymen in that island have much occupied the care of the Ministry, and they may remember with satisfaction that, in this period, they have solved one of the most difficult problems connected with its government and people, by establishing a system of public education open to all classes and all creeds.

Nevertheless a danger, in its ultimate results scarcely less disastrous than pestilence and famine, and which now engages your Excellency's anxious attention, distracts that country. A portion of its population is attempting to sever the Constitutional tie which unites it to Great Britain in that bond which has favoured the power and prosperity of both.

It is to be hoped that all men of light and leading will resist this destructive doctrine. The strength of this nation depends on the unity of feeling which should pervade the United Kingdom and its widespread dependencies. The first duty of an English Minister should be to consolidate that co-operation which renders irresistible a community educated, as our own, in an equal love of liberty and law.

And yet there are some who challenge the expediency of the imperial character of this realm. Having attempted, and failed, to enfeeble our colonies by their policy of decomposition, they may perhaps now recognise in the disintegration of the United Kingdom a mode which will not only accomplish but precipitate their purpose.

The immediate dissolution of Parliament will afford an opportunity to the nation to decide upon a course which will materially influence its future fortunes and shape its destiny.

Rarely in this century has there been an occasion more critical. The power of England and the peace of Europe will largely depend on the verdict of the country. Her Majesty's present Ministers have hitherto been enabled to secure that peace, so necessary to the welfare of all civilised countries, and so peculiarly the interest of our own. But this ineffable blessing cannot be obtained by the passive principle of non-interference. Peace rests on the presence, not to say the

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ascendancy, of England in the councils of Europe. Even at this moment, the doubt, supposed to be inseparable from popular election, if it does not diminish, certainly arrests her influence, and is a main reason for not delaying an appeal to the national voice. Whatever may be its consequences to Her Majesty's present advisers, may it return to Westminister a Parliament not unworthy of the power of England, and resolved to maintain it!

With the exception of the characteristically Disraelian phrase, 'men of light and leading,' this was not a very happily worded document. Besides noticing a misused 'and which' in the third paragraph—a constantly recurring inelegance of the writer's style—criticism justly pounced on the clumsiness of a 'tie which unites' nations in a 'bond,' of 'to consolidate co-operation,' of 'challenge the expediency of the imperial character of this realm.' A more serious matter was the maladroit claim for England of 'ascendancy' in the councils of Europe. Challenged in the House of Lords, Beaconsfield explained that he meant, not supremacy, but only moral ascendancy. Most serious of all was the definite assertion in the letter that Ireland occupied once more, and must inevitably occupy, the forefront of politics. The ordinary English and Scottish elector was certain to resent the suggestion that the attention of Parliament should be largely monopolised, as it was ten years before, with Irish affairs. On the whole, it is not surprising that the manifesto proved in the electoral fight to be rather a welcome target for Beaconsfield's foes than an inspiriting banner for his friends. It lost him the Irish vote at the English elections. 'Vote against Benjamin Disraeli,' rang the Home Rule clarion, 'as you would vote against the mortal enemy of your country and your race.' It did not rally to the Government the Anti-Home Rule Liberals; they trusted, and with some reason, in Hartington's pledges. And yet in substance, in his two main points, Beaconsfield was right and his warnings were soon justified. Ireland was at that moment the danger-point, as he, with official knowledge of its state to guide him, told his countrymen. And the

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experience of the last six years, especially of the Russo-Turkish War and the Berlin Congress, only confirmed the lesson taught by the Crimean War of 1854, and the Danish War of 1864, that, in order to preserve European peace, England must take a leading part in European councils, and speak in them with a firm and unambiguous voice. In the late autumn Beaconsfield had the melancholy satisfaction of saying, 'I told you so.'

To Lord Beauchamp.

HUGHENDEN, *Nov.* 21, '80.—. . . You are kind in recalling my letter to the Duke of Marlborough. Our enemies said, at the time, that I had fixed on the only two subjects on which they could have no difficulty: that Mr. Gladstone would settle Turkey by an European concert, and that Ireland only required a truly Liberal Government. The European concert is a 'fiasco,' and nearly landed us in war, which I intimated! and Ireland is—anarchy!

I must say I thought my friends, at the time I wrote the letter, seemed very much to agree with the then Opposition, and evidently thought I had blundered. I don't count you among them: you are always faithful, and have a good political nose! . . .

At the moment the Opposition treated the Irish portion of the manifesto as a barefaced attempt to divert the attention of the electorate from the blunders and wrong-doing of the Government, Gladstone in particular describing Beaconsfield's warnings as 'baseless' and 'terrifying insinuations.' Four years later, on September 1, 1884, Gladstone made a curious apology. 'I frankly admit,' he said, 'I had had much upon my hands connected with the doings of the Beaconsfield Government in almost every quarter of the world, and I did not know, no one knew, the severity of the crisis that was already swelling upon the horizon, and that shortly after rushed upon us like a flood.' Beaconsfield knew, and had warned the country in impressive tones, but Gladstone was too headstrong to listen. Here are the counts on which Gladstone asked the constituencies to condemn the Beaconsfield Government.

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At home the Ministers have neglected legislation; aggravated the public distress by continual shocks to confidence, which is the life of enterprise; augmented the public expenditure and taxation for purposes not merely unnecessary but mischievous; and plunged the finances, which were handed over to them in a state of singular prosperity, into a series of deficits unexampled in modern times. . . . Abroad they have strained, if they have not endangered, the prerogative by gross misuse; have weakened the empire by needless wars, unprofitable extensions, and unwise engagements; and have dishonoured it in the eyes of Europe by filching the island of Cyprus from the Porte, under a treaty clandestinely concluded in violation of the Treaty of Paris. . . . They have aggrandised Russia; lured Turkey on to her dismemberment, if not her ruin; replaced the Christian population of Macedonia under a degrading yoke, and loaded India with the costs and dangers of an unjustifiable war. . . . From day to day, under a Ministry called, as if in mockery, Conservative, the nation is perplexed with fear of change.

This was the theme which Gladstone elaborated in another whirlwind campaign in Midlothian. Readers of this biography, who have followed Beaconsfield's policy from the inside, may rub their eyes and marvel how even self-righteousness and jealousy could so pervert the doings and aims of Ministers. Far from neglecting legislation, Ministers had placed on the Statute-Book a whole series of valuable measures of social reform. They had carried the country safely through a threatening crisis in foreign affairs, without war, and, in spite of bad trade and bad harvests, with only a slight increase of expenditure and taxation. In many ways, but especially by the purchase of the Suez Canal shares, by the substitution of the Treaty of Berlin for the Treaty of San Stefano, and by the rectification of the north-west frontier of India, they had materially strengthened the defensive position of the Empire. Finally they had greatly raised the reputation of their country in the eyes of Europe and of the world.

Extravagant, however, as Gladstone's denunciation was, it could hardly fail of effect in the absence of any adequate reply. Not only Beaconsfield himself,

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but the two hardest hitters among his colleagues, Salisbury and Cranbrook, were debarred by being peers from taking part in the fray. And Northcote, Cross, and Beach were outmatched in platform oratory by Hartington, Bright, and Harcourt. The moderation, too, as well as weight with which Hartington stated his case kept the moderate Liberals, in spite of their disgust at Midlothian methods, true to their party. While outrageous abuse of Beaconsfield formed the staple of Liberal orations throughout the country, Hartington prefaced his condemnation of the policy of the Minister by the following chivalrous tribute to the man.

> It may be said that Lord Beaconsfield is ambitious. I should like to know what man who has attained to the position to which he has attained in the political life of his country is not actuated by motives of ambition. No one can, certainly, attribute any mean or unworthy motive to Lord Beaconsfield. We may disagree with his politics, but we must admire the genius which the man has shown under the disadvantages that he has laboured under. I firmly believe that Lord Beaconsfield has had in view what he believes to be the greatness of his country and the power of the Sovereign whom he serves.

Not only were Ministers outmatched on the platform, but they had lost their previous advantage in organisation. While the Liberals had been stimulated by defeat to perfect the Birmingham caucus, the Tories had parted with their manager, Gorst, whose organising capacity had paved the way to victory in 1874. A correspondence between him and Beaconsfield in 1877 shows how party interests had been neglected and mismanaged in three years. He told Beaconsfield that in order to renovate organisation 'you must put a stop to that which has been the chief cause of all the mischief that has occurred—the system . . . of managing elections at the Treasury.' He pointed out that 'the established principle of non-interference with the local leaders has in many instances been neglected; and those leaders have been constantly offended and alienated both in the distribution of patronage

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and in other matters.' He was certain that 'unless some energetic measures are speedily adopted, our organisation, whenever the election does take place, will be as inferior to that of our opponents as it was superior in 1874.' The measures taken in 1877 were not sufficiently energetic, probably because Beaconsfield, with the labours of government on his weakening shoulders, was unable to give personal superintendence to the work; partly, perhaps, because he was less in touch with party and popular feeling than when he led the House of Commons. At any rate the event proved, when the General Election of 1880 came, that the Conservative Central Office was quite ignorant of the mind of the electorate. Its representative advised the dissolution in March, and calculated that the party would lose 6 or 7 seats in Scotland, 5 or 6 in Ireland, and 5 on balance in England, but would return with a working majority for the Government.

It is, however, only fair to the Conservative managers to say that the bulk of the Liberal managers did not look forward to any very dissimilar result. Brand, the Speaker, who had been a Liberal Whip himself, came to an understanding with Beaconsfield as to the Speakership in the next Parliament, on the assumption that the General Election would not produce a change of Government. The interchange of ideas was creditable both to Prime Minister and to Speaker.

Memorandum by Mr. Speaker Brand.

March 9, '80.—Saw Ld. B. accordingly, and informed him that I waited on him because in a few days the Speaker's chair would be vacant. I said that I was very sensible of the difficulties which every Prime Minister must have in the conduct of affairs, and that it had occurred to me that he might desire on public grounds to make a new appointment.

If so, I said, I should have no ground of complaint, on the contrary, I would willingly facilitate such an arrangement by withdrawing from Parl't; adding, that having worked hard for many years, and feeling the effects of work more as I grew older, I should be thankful for rest.

Ld. B. said that I had been nominated by one party, and

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adopted by another, and that I could not be regarded as a partisan Speaker, being approved by both sides.

He was frank and cordial as to the estimation in which I was held; and added that the question of retirement should be left entirely to my own convenience.

I replied, that in that case I should consider it my duty to go forward in the service of the House, and that I was led to that conclusion mainly by the consideration of the new powers and responsibilities lately cast upon the Speaker by the House.—H. B.

It was with some such expectations as those of the Speaker and of the Tory Central Office that Beaconsfield awaited the elections, though he was haunted by the fear of a defection of county voters owing to the prolonged agricultural distress. He was also depressed by the open opposition of his old colleague Derby, who announced his adhesion to the Liberal cause shortly before the formal dissolution of Parliament. Beaconsfield spent Easter and the electoral period, of which Easter was the centre, at Hatfield, which had been placed at his disposal by his colleague the Foreign Secretary, who had gone to the South of France to recover from his illness, along with Lady Salisbury and other members of the family. 'At this awful pause my mind is a blank,' he told Lady Bradford; but one letter to her gives a picture of his surroundings and his anxieties.

To Lady Bradford.

HATFIELD HOUSE, *March* 29.[1]—. . . I have not written before, for I have not a word to say. As for news about the elections, that no longer exists. All you hear now is mere speculation and gossip. The seed is sown, and we must wait for the harvest: I hope our electoral one will be better than our agricultural. We are in the hands of the ballot.

The petty boroughs of the West seem our weakest point in England. Alington ought to have kept Dorchester right, and Lady W[estminster] Shaftesbury. Poole, Xchurch, were always weak horses; but I fain hope we have a chance in both.

I hope the Yorkshire mess may yet be cooked to our satisfaction. Wharncliffe is very wroth anent, but rather sanguine about Sheffield.

[1] Easter Monday.

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I am here quite alone, except Monty, who occasionally goes up to town to dine with Princes and Princesses. The eldest son of the house, an agreeable youth, is assisting his brother-in-law[1] in canvassing Hertford, where they are unexpectedly pushed. He sometimes gets home for dinner. Then another son comes for a day with his tutor, and one evening two ladies arrived (an aunt and cousin) and so on. Everybody seems to do what they like—an extraordinarily free and easy house.

I drink Grand Château Margaux of 1870—exquisite—by special orders; but, as it is not given to anyone else, I feel awkward, but forget my embarrassment in the exquisite flavor. All this because I mentioned once my detestation of hosts who give you an inferior claret at dinner, when alone sensible men drink wine, and reserve their superior *crus* for after the repast.

To-day a brilliant sun, wh. we have had every day, and a blue sky; but what we have not had every day, instead of a blasting east, a delicious soft, wind. This will do me good.

With the exception of Gladstone and some enthusiastic Radicals, nobody expected a sweeping victory for either side; and the general opinion, especially in London and the South of England, was that Ministers would be able to maintain their position. Accordingly, the result of the first day's polling, on Wednesday, March 31, was a dramatic surprise: the Conservatives lost, on balance, no fewer than 15 seats in 69 constituencies. By Saturday 50 seats had been lost; and all hope of a Ministerial majority had been abandoned. Such was the result of the urban polling. Next week, the farmers in the counties, as Beaconsfield had feared they might, added to the Ministerial discomfiture. In the final result it was reckoned that, whereas the old Parliament contained 351 Conservatives, 250 Liberals, and 51 Home Rulers, the new Parliament would number 349 Liberals, 243 Conservatives, and 60 Home Rulers. Prolonged depression in trade, a series of bad harvests, warlike adventures in Asia and Africa which, though in the main victorious, had been marked by unexpected and apparently avoidable disasters, and, of course, the swing of the pendulum—all had their share

[1] It was his first cousin, Mr. Arthur Balfour.

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in bringing about the catastrophe. But undoubtedly the chief factor was Gladstone's success in instilling into the minds of many of the most serious, and more of the most ignorant, of the electorate, the conviction that Beaconsfield's policy, even granting that it might have safeguarded British interests, was nevertheless morally wrong.

Under this crushing and unexpected disaster Beaconsfield bore himself with unruffled dignity and composure; but he did not conceal from his intimates that he felt its bitterness.

To Lady Bradford.

HATFIELD, *April* 1.—Alas! Alas! I cannot write a letter, and almost thought of sending you a blank sheet, which, at least, wd. have shown my sympathy. In the general discomfiture, the success of Francis[1] wd. have been to you a consolation.

I can [no] more at present. With great affection, Yrs., B.

April 2.—I return to town to-morrow and remain there while the dreadful ceremonies are performed. I suppose it may take six weeks—6 weeks as disagreeable as can be easily conceived.

Never was so great a discomfiture with a cause so inadequate. I think, as far as I can collect, 'hard times' was the cry against us. The suffering want a change—no matter what, they are sick of waiting. . . .

We have an account by Barrington of a talk with his chief, showing the equable temper in which the beaten Minister met his fate.

Memorandum by Lord Barrington.

CARLTON CLUB, *April* 4, 1880.—With Lord B[eaconsfield] at luncheon and afterwards till 3.30. He is not cast down by adversity and never has been, but looks forward to the next month rather with annoyance, because of holding responsibility without power, and being pestered by all who want honours showered on them by wholesale, which is of course impossible. He was never very sanguine, but rather expected a small majority either way which would have led to a weak Government, which would have gone out ingloriously in a short time hence. He will not hear of anyone being blamed for ignorantly advising him to dissolve. All trouble to ascertain

[1] Hon. F. Bridgman was defeated at Bolton

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what would happen had been taken, tho' perhaps some of the sub-agents in the country held out unjustifiable hopes. In Cabinets the Peers thought it was not for them to judge the proper time for dissolving, and no one was more enthusiastic in favour of its taking place immediately than cautious Northcote, also Cross. Beach and J. Manners were not of their opinion, but only Beach spoke out as far as he remembered. The chief proof that the principal wire-pullers of the party were not to blame, lay in the ignorance of the other side, for no one anticipated this wonderful Radical *pronunciamiento*.

For his own part he was not sorry to have some rest, and pass the spring and summer in the woods of Hughenden, which he had never been able to do, and longed for. At the same time he would gladly have gone on managing England, especially with reference to foreign affairs, which, although partially settled, still wore a grave aspect. He chiefly deplored his fall from power, on account of M. Corry, who in his opinion was fitted to fill any *Cabinet* office. This was said with genuine warmth.

What would follow? The Queen would certainly send for Granville, and he and Hartington would certainly form a Government whether Gladstone liked it or not. After a year or so, G[ladstone] might upset Granville, and then the moderate Liberals might have to come to us for support, and we should give it. But at all events Granville would have the opportunity this time of being Prime Minister. He did not think Gladstone would serve under him. Perhaps Derby would, but the Foreign Office would never be conducted by anyone like Salisbury, who acted for himself, and did not leave it all to the permanent officials, which had been, and would again be the case now. The Queen is in despair, but that she will get over. . . .

Lord B. spoke very strongly against Gladstone, and said his conduct in 'chucking up the sponge' as Leader, and spouting all over the country, like an irresponsible demagogue, was wholly inexcusable in a man who was a statesman. . . .

It is pleasing to see how well D[israeli] is, and with what charming temper he takes this evil stroke of fortune in the sunset of his great career. So many of his friends, especially ladies, send to enquire how he is. 'As well as can be expected,' says he, as if he had been confined!

No one took Beaconsfield's defeat in the Election more to heart than his Sovereign. Her Majesty had been sanguine, more sanguine than her Minister, that he

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would secure a majority. She had accepted the Southwark victory as a sign. 'It shows,' she had written to him, 'what the feeling of the country is.' She had been confident that the factiousness of the Opposition in the Commons, and the crude appeal of Gladstone to humanitarianism and ignorance in regard to delicate questions of foreign affairs, must disgust her people as they had disgusted herself. And now she saw before her the prospect of an immediate wrench, more painful than any since the fall of Melbourne, her early friend and political mentor. Moreover, when Melbourne resigned, she was only twenty-two and had the speedy rallying power of youth; and she was a happily married wife, with a husband to turn to for support. Now she was over sixty, and a widow; and the complete confidence and warm affection which her mature judgment had bestowed on Beaconsfield could not be uprooted and transferred. As early as April 2 he telegraphed to her at Baden that the results so far announced left no doubt of the defeat of the Ministry. She could hardly believe the news; but telegraphed back her great distress. 'Nothing more than trouble and trial await me. I consider it a great public misfortune.' And again the next day she expressed her 'intense astonishment, distress, and annoyance.' The correspondence which followed clearly showed both his view of the catastrophe which had overwhelmed him and the depth of her feelings at the approaching parting. His own sorrow at the severance of the intimate personal relation has a very genuine ring.

To Queen Victoria.

HATFIELD, *April* 2, 1880.—Lord Beaconsfield with his humble duty to your Majesty. He has already, by a cyphered telegram this morning, had the honor to apprise your Majesty of his general view of the result of the election. He believes that the counties, by their decision, will ensure to your Majesty, in the Govt. of your Majesty's Dominions, the advantage of a powerful Opposition. It is true the farmers are suffering and are discontented, but they always have difficulty in moving and combining. On the present occasion events

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have been too quick for them, and, with returning prosperity, they will, in a season or two, revert to their ancient loyalty and love of order. Lord Beaconsfield attributes the cause of the present disaster to that sympathy for change which is inherent in man. Small communities are capricious, and are not affected by strong national feeling to the degree which influences cities where there is a vast population. The immense majority in the City of London in favor of your Majesty's Govt., the considerable numbers in Westminster, and in Greenwich (the only poll of a Metropolitan district, which, as yet, has reached Lord Beaconsfield), the return of Mr. Wortley for Sheffield, and the nearness of the numbers in a vast amount of polls, indicate the existence of a substantial and powerful party in the towns. Surely the enlightened opinion of the country is in favor of the policy which has been pursued. The suffrage of the City of London is a proof of that, as well as the circumstance that every powerful newspaper, save those known to be under the influence of Russia, has upheld your Majesty's Govt. Lord Beaconsfield leaves Hatfield for Downing St. to-morrow morning.

From Queen Victoria.

VILLA HOHENLOHE, BADEN-BADEN, *April* 4, 1880.—The Queen has received Lord Beaconsfield's letter with the deepest interest. There is not a doubt that ½ of these 'Liberals' cannot be considered an acting majority, and the majorities in so many cases are so very small, whereas those in London, at Sheffield, and others in favour of the Govt. are so overwhelming. The newspapers, except the really violent ones, are all so strong in support of Ld. Beaconsfield that the Queen feels sure that there will be the very greatest difficulty in forming a Govt. The grief to her of having to part with the kindest and most devoted as well as one of the wisest Ministers the Queen has ever had, is not to be told, tho' she feels sure it will be but for a very short time. She won't, however, contemplate this at present. . . .

To Queen Victoria.

DOWNING STREET, *April* 8, 1880.—Lord Beaconsfield . . . had the honor to receive yesterday your Majesty's most gracious letter, the receipt of which he acknowledged. He cannot conceal, nor wishes he to conceal, that the present state of affairs costs him a pang; not for the country, for, having done his duty to it with ceaseless effort and entire fidelity, he leaves its fortunes to Providence.

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But his separation from your Majesty is almost overwhelming. His relations with your Majesty were his chief, he might almost say his only, happiness and interest in this world. They came to him when he was alone, and they have inspired and sustained him in his isolation. Your Majesty's judgment and rich experience often guided him, and in the most trying moments he felt he served a Sovereign who was constant and consistent, and who never quailed.

Then, again, the brightness of those conversations, in which your Majesty occasionally deigned to blend domestic with imperial confidence, had a charm to him quite inexpressible, and their recollection will be to him a source of frequent consolation.

Thanking your Majesty for all your goodness to him, he remains with all duty and affection, Your Majesty's grateful and devoted BEACONSFIELD.

(*Same date*).—. . . Lord Beaconsfield in *six* years, has advised your Majesty to create fifteen peers.

His predecessor in *five* years, advised your Majesty to create thirty-seven peers.

Lord Beaconsfield has no wish to place himself in competition with his predecessor in this respect. He has always studiously refrained from pressing your Majesty on the subject of honors, the distinction of which he wished to prevent being depreciated by their becoming too general. . . .

He hopes your Majesty may be pleased to confer some distinguished mark of your Majesty's favor on the Viceroy of your Majesty's Indian Empire. Never was a Viceroy so ill-treated by an Opposition. Lord Lytton is a first-rate man, and, being a real orator, his presence in the House of Lords will be invaluable. He has telegraphed to Lord Beaconsfield to place his resignation in your Majesty's hands, when Lord Beaconsfield tenders his own. . . .

From Queen Victoria.

VILLA HOHENLOHE, BADEN-BADEN, *April* 9, 1880.

DEAR LORD BEACONSFIELD,

I cannot thank you for your most kind letter, which affected me much, in the 3rd person—it is too formal; and when we correspond—which I hope we shall on many a *private* subject and without anyone being astonished or offended, and even more without anyone knowing about it—I hope it will be in this more easy form. You can be of such use to me about my family and other things and about great public questions. My great hope and belief is, that this shamefully heterogeneous union—out of mere folly—will separate

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into many parts very soon, and that the Conservatives will come in stronger than ever in a short time. Possibly a coalition first. But you must promise me for the country's, as well as for my sake, to be very watchful and very severe, and to allow no lowering of Gt. Britain's proud position! It must not be lowered. The Army and Navy *not* diminished, and I look to you for that. Give me that firm promise. I do not care for the trouble of changes of Govt. if it is to have a secure and safe one, which the new one cannot be. I am shocked and ashamed at what has happened. It is really disgraceful. . . .

The sort of mad and unreasoning *flow* of Liberal success is so unnatural that I feel certain it can't last. It is not like as if the Govt. had had a succession of defeats; the Opposition never the least expected it. Of course I shall not take any notice of . . . Mr. Gladstone, who has done so much mischief. It is most essential that *that* should be known and that is why I cyphered to you. . . . You must not think it is a real parting. I shall always let you hear how I am and what I am doing, and you must promise to let me hear from and about you. I have many about me who will write to you and I hope you will to them—so that we are not cut off. That would be too painful. The Liberal Opposition has been very factious; Sir M. H. Beach is inclined to be too generous. Do not be indulgent but make them feel what they have brought on themselves. Indulgence and forbearance after such disgraceful and unpatriotic attacks would not be right. It is not like an ordinary change of Govt.—if so it must be! It was the bad beginning which led to the whole mischief. If the Elections had been favourable that day, *all* the rest would have followed as a matter of course.

Hoping that you are well,

Ever yours affly. and gratefully,

V.R.I.

The Queen was very anxious to testify in some public manner her high appreciation of her favourite Minister. 'The Queen wishes it were in her power,' she wrote on April 9, 'to confer any other mark of her gratitude and admiration on Lord Beaconsfield. Will he not allow her *now*—to let a barony be settled on his nephew in remembrance of the great services of Lord Beaconsfield?' While refusing for his nephew on the same grounds as he had given in 1876, Beaconsfield recommended his private secretary, who was also his intimate friend, for the honour

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—a unique distinction, which no private secretary had received before, and which few indeed had been in a position to support. The Queen's only hesitation about granting the request was that she feared that it might not be 'advantageous' for Beaconsfield and Corry; but on being reassured she gladly consented.

To Queen Victoria.

DOWNING STREET, *April* 11.—Lord Beaconsfield . . . is most touched by your Majesty's gracious proposal respecting his heir. In asking leave still to decline this gracious offer, he would express his most grateful sense of its repetition.

He doubts not that, in due time, his countrymen will give an opening in public life to his nephew. If he be equal to the occasion, he may yet serve your Majesty, for your Majesty, thank God, is really yet young.

Personally, all that Lord Beaconsfield can desire for himself is, that your Majesty may deign sometimes to remember him.

There is one point on which he would ask permission yet to trouble your Majesty. It refers to the position of Mr. Corry. Mr. Corry has served Lord Beaconsfield for fourteen years with great advantage to Lord Beaconsfield, and with absolute devotion. He has refused every preferment[1] that Lord Beaconsfield has offered to him, and Lord Beaconsfield has offered to him the highest in his power. He has refused the uncontested representation of his own county of Shropshire, as his duties as an M.P. were not consistent with those to your Majesty's Prime Minister.

A great change in the social position of Mr. Corry has taken place since your Majesty left England. He has come into possession of Rowton Castle, and a domain of seven thousand acres in Shropshire. His income will exceed ten thousand per annum.

[1] The principal offer that Disraeli had made to Corry was that of Clerk of the Parliaments, on March 9, 1875. 'I think it is the best post in my gift,' wrote Disraeli, 'both in matter of dignity, agreeable duties, and income. Although you have hitherto refused everything I have offered you, I make one more effort to accomplish some material evidence of my personal regard for you, my appreciation of your abilities, and my gratitude for your faithful services. The office is one for which, both from your legal training, and now considerable experience of public life, you are eminently qualified. You need not hurry your decision. Think well over it. I shall ever lament, I feel sure, my loss, but shall find some consolation in the thought that I have advanced the fortunes of a dear and devoted friend.' It was at this time that Disraeli secured for his brother Ralph the post of Clerk-Assistant in the House of Lords.

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Mr. Corry is of noble birth on either side: his parents were both the children of Earls. His maternal grandmother was a daughter of the then Duke of Marlborough.

He is now forty years of age, with a great fund of political knowledge and experience in addition to talents of a high class. He possesses the confidence of leading men to an extraordinary degree.

It is impossible that such a man will be content to fall back into the crowd of dismissed private secretaries. He will probably become absorbed in that fashionable world where he is a favorite.

Is it possible that your Majesty might make him Baron Rowton of Rowton Castle in the county of Shropshire?

He knows nothing of this request, being away from me on private affairs, of which your Majesty has been apprised.

It would be for him a link to public life, and he would be of great use to Lord Beaconsfield in keeping him *au fait* to all going on in the House of Lords in Lord Beaconsfield's occasional absence, for nature tells Lord Beaconsfield he must sometimes rest.

Not only Mr. Corry knows nothing of this suggestion, but Lord Beaconsfield does not wish to press it on your Majesty in any sense. He would not wish it to occur, unless your Majesty thought it a wise and becoming arrangement.

April 17.—Lord Beaconsfield . . . has had the honor to receive your Majesty's most gracious letter from Flushing, but in vain does he endeavor to express his sense of the favor which your Majesty has conferred on him.

He does not anticipate much hostile criticism on the elevation of Mr. Corry, as Lord Beaconsfield proposes that it shall not be mixed up with the other honors, nor known until Lord Beaconsfield's resignation is announced. When his opponents have got rid of him, Lord Beaconsfield's offences will be forgotten, and perhaps take the most charitable shape of a sincere, though mistaken, duty to his Sovereign and his country.

Lord Beaconsfield looks forward with the greatest interest to his audience of your Majesty. There is much, comparatively formal, business to transact, when the greater theme, and all its probable and possible consequences, have been considered, or decided on. . . .

While waiting for his Sovereign to return, Beaconsfield occupied himself with winding up the affairs of his Government, especially with dealing with those whom he called on a docket 'pesterers of the 11th hour'—the applicants

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'POWER AND PLACE.'

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for honours, rewards, and appointments. The following letter shows how he dealt with one such 'pesterer.'

To —— ——.

April 16, 1880.—I doubt not you would make an excellent peer, and, had my Ministry continued, I should in due time in all probability have had the pleasure of submitting your name to Her Majesty; but I am obliged to consider the claims of those who, while they have made great sacrifices, both of time and treasure, for the Government, have received hitherto neither office nor honors.

You have received the first and obtained reputation by the discharge of its duties; and tho' the post you fill is not a high one, you must remember that you continued there at your own desire, and that I was always ready to promote you.

How is the Opposition to be carried on if all those, who have had the advantage of official experience, desire to leave the House of Commons?

I have been obliged this morning to ask this question of one of your colleagues, as good a man of business as yourself with an estate not less important.

To Lady Bradford.

Downing Street, *April* 8.—I have nothing to say: a most dreary life and labor mine! Winding up a Government as hard work as forming one, without any of its excitement. My room is filled with beggars, mournful or indignant, and my desk covered with letters like a snowstorm.

It is the last, and least glorious exercise of power, and will be followed, wh. is the only compensation, by utter neglect and isolation.

April 10.—I only write to you because I think you would prefer having a blank sheet to nothing. This is a blank sheet.

My life continues the same. Discomfited, defeated, and, if not disgraced, prostrate, by a singular anomaly and irony of fate I pass my life now in exercising supreme power—making peers, creating baronets, and showering places and pensions on a rapacious crew.

The Faery arrives on the 17th, and I am to be with her on the morning of 18th, and stay a day or so. . . .

April 13.—. . . John Manners has done well and pulled his man thro' too—on wh. I did not count. John is to have the red ribbon.[1] He is the only one of the present Cabinet

[1] Northcote and Cross also were given the G.C.B., and Cranbrook the G.C.S.I.

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who was in the original Derby Cabinet of '52 and has been in every one since of wh. I have been a member. . . .

DOWNING STREET, *April* 18.—I do not know when I wrote to you: I cannot count days in the dreary excitement in which I live. That, however, must soon cease, at least I hope so, tho' until I see my Sovereign I can say nothing absolutely positive. . . .

I have given Henry Lennox a place of £1,500 *per ann.*: but I fear the first achievement of the H. of Commons will be to take it from him. However, I have given him a chance. . . .

This offer to Henry Lennox is an example of the excessive lengths to which Beaconsfield's devotion to old friends sometimes led him. The post was that of Chief Civil Service Commissioner, and the Cabinet, with Northcote at their head, had great difficulty in persuading their chief that such an appointment could not possibly be justified in Parliament and must be abandoned.

As soon as the trend of the elections was beyond a doubt Beaconsfield despatched one of the junior members of the Cabinet, Hicks Beach, to Baden in order to reconcile the Queen, so far as might be, to the inevitable change. Beach reported on April 6: 'I endeavoured to put before H.M. the view of the present position of affairs, and of the prospect before us, which you had impressed upon me; and I hope with some success, as I hear, from those who have seen H.M. since, that she is less disturbed and more hopeful as to the future.' She almost immediately raised the question of Beaconsfield's successor.

From Sir Michael Hicks Beach.

HOTEL DE L'EUROPE, BADEN-BADEN, *April* 9.—. . . I may mention that H.M. spoke to me to-day upon the choice of the person who should be entrusted with the formation of a Government: and expressed a decided preference for Lord Hartington over Lord Granville. I remarked that the latter was the older, and more experienced: but H.M. said she . . . thought he would be too pliable to Radical influence: saying that he had been very bitter lately. I remarked that Mr. Gladstone's position would then be, as it seemed to me, a very dangerous one: as supposing Lord H. to be Prime Minister, and Mr. G. outside the

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Govt., the latter would control public affairs without responsibility. H.M. said that she could not believe that Mr. Gladstone would take any, but the principal post, in a Government: and that she interpreted his recent speeches as intimating that he would not accept even that. I said that I thought they might have a very opposite interpretation. But I am pretty certain that the Queen will not send for Mr. Gladstone in the first instance: and will only be induced, if she is induced at all, to do so in the end by the greatest possible pressure. H.M. spoke very strongly on this point. . . .

The Queen had apparently a wider liberty of choice on the present occasion than at any crisis during her reign, except perhaps in 1859 and subsequently in 1894. Gladstone had definitely resigned the Liberal leadership five years before, and Hartington had been elected by the party in the House of Commons as their leader, Granville remaining leader in the House of Lords. There was no single leader of the whole party, though Gladstone, in his memoranda on this crisis, appeared to maintain the very undemocratic doctrine that, as he had 'resigned his trust' to Granville in 1875, he had thereby constituted him his successor.[1] The natural course for the Queen to take was to send for either Granville or Hartington. Granville had the advantage of length of service, Hartington that of leadership in the Chamber which made and unmade Ministries. But the situation was complicated by Gladstone's vehement reappearance, a few years after his retirement, in the forefront of politics, and by his Midlothian speeches, which were the main feature of the election. But for his fiery zeal, there could hardly have been the political upheaval disclosed by the polls. He had, in fact, taken the lead; but he had himself protested, when entering on the campaign, that it was his hope that 'the verdict of the country will give to Lord Granville and Lord Hartington the responsible charge of affairs.'

The selection of a statesman to be entrusted with the formation of a Government is one of the very few public acts which the Sovereign can constitutionally perform

[1] See Lord Morley's *Gladstone*, Bk. VII., ch. 9.

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without his responsibility being covered by Ministerial advice. It lies entirely within his discretion whether he shall or shall not consult the outgoing Minister. Queen Victoria clung to her prerogative in the matter, and usually acted on her own judgment, only consulting the outgoing Minister when, as happened with Melbourne and Aberdeen, she had special confidence in him. In the present case the Queen was parting with a Minister in whom her confidence was absolute, and she acted under his advice throughout what proved to be a difficult and delicate negotiation. Her own decided inclination was to send in the first place for Hartington; and her Minister advised her that this was, constitutionally speaking, the right course. He had apparently changed his mind as to the relative claims of Granville and Hartington since his talk with Barrington. Her Majesty returned to England on Saturday the 17th and commanded her Minister's presence the next morning. She made a memorandum of what passed at the audience.

Memorandum by Queen Victoria.

WINDSOR CASTLE, *April* 18, 1880.—I saw Lord Beaconsfield this morning at ½ pt. 12. After remarks on the sad and startling result of the elections which no one was in the least prepared for, I asked him what he advised me to do for the real good of the country, which we both agreed was inseparable from my own; and he replied that, irrespective of any personal feeling which I might have respecting Mr. Gladstone, the right and constitutional course for me to take was to send for Lord Hartington. He was in his heart a conservative, a gentleman, and very straightforward in his conduct. Lord Granville was less disinterested and looked more for his own objects. That Mr. Gladstone had formally given up the leadership, and was only clung to by the Radicals. That he (Lord Beaconsfield) could tell me something which he thought more hopeful for the future, viz., that, tho' some dreadful people like Bradlaugh had been elected, a great many of the respectable and moderate old Whigs had also been. There were 200 of them, he thought, and 240 of the Conservatives—a very compact and united body—returned, while the Home Rulers and extreme Radicals only amounted to 190. By calling upon a Whig to form a Government, these moderate

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Liberals would rally round and support him, and the Radicals would be harmless.

He did not wish to meet Parliament, but to resign before, as in 1868 and as Mr. Gladstone did in 1874; that it was a mockery to have to prepare a Queen's Speech; that an amendment would be proposed of want of confidence in the House of Commons, in which all the Moderates and Radicals would have to join, which was to be deprecated; while in the House of Lords any amendment would be defeated, Lord Beaconsfield having a very large majority there; and this would bring the two Houses into collision, and the Lords would be humiliated by having to yield to the House of Commons. . . .

I said that it would be impossible for me to send for Mr. Gladstone, as . . . I considered him to be the cause of all the mischief that brought on the Russian war, and that he had done everything he could to vilify and weaken the Government in times of the greatest difficulty . . . and could he be my Minister under such circumstances? I myself felt sure he would not expect or wish it. India would be a great difficulty. Foreign affairs equally so. What could Lord Hartington be? First Lord of the Treasury? . . .

I repeated what I had written, viz., that this was no ordinary change of Government, but had been brought about by the most unjust and shameful persecution of Mr. Gladstone, that therefore I hoped that he (Lord Beaconsfield) would be very watchful and very severe upon them, and prevent any mischief, which he could and said he would do. But he has great confidence in Lord Hartington. . . .

I have omitted mentioning that Lord Beaconsfield said that certainly the Conservatives had been too confident, and that they had not had that same organisation or worked as hard as the Liberals had. That the Liberals had worked on that American system called caucus, originated by the great Radical, Mr. Chamberlain.

Beaconsfield seems seriously to have thought that the Whigs and moderate Liberals had been returned to the House of Commons in sufficient strength to make a Hartington Administration feasible. He may very well have had some communication to that effect from his friend Harcourt, who was at this time pressing Hartington to go forward and form a Government if the Queen should ask him to undertake the task.[1] At any rate he repeated his advice to the Queen, three days later, enforcing it

[1] See Holland's *Life of the Duke of Devonshire*, Vol. I., ch. 12.

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by forwarding, no doubt in good faith, a report about the intentions of the Liberal leaders which was only true of Granville and Hartington, and quite unfounded in regard to Gladstone.

To Queen Victoria.

DOWNING STREET, *April* 21, 1880.—Lord Beaconsfield . . . was assured last night by a person of authority, that the Triumvirate had met, and agreed that they would serve under the individual of the three, whom your Majesty should graciously appoint.

Nothing has occurred to change the opinion which Lord Beaconsfield had the honor to express to your Majesty.

Even if your Majesty wished Mr. Gladstone to be chief, the Constitutional course would still be to send for an acknowledged leader of opposition.

Lord Beaconsfield is informed, that the Whigs in the new Parliament amount to 237. Lord Hartington must be aware of this.

Lord Beaconsfield earnestly advises your Majesty to make no conditions when the person sent for arrives: merely enquire whether he is prepared to form an Administration. Conditions may develop afterwards.

He has not five minutes to write this, and he is anxious it should reach your Majesty without delay.

This letter was sent to the Queen on the last morning of the existence of the Beaconsfield Administration. The programme of the day, as the retiring Minister told Lady Bradford, was: 'This morning a Cabinet, and then to Windsor for final operation. H.M. insists upon softening the catastrophe by my dining and sleeping at her Castle.' The Cabinet had resolved, at its meeting in the previous week, to resign at once, without waiting for the opening of Parliament; and this meeting, having only to ratify that decision, was rather, as Hardy tells us, 'conversational.'

[Beaconsfield] thanked us all for the cordiality and harmony with which we had worked with him. The Chancellor expressed briefly what we all felt, and Northcote, Cross, and Salisbury added a few words; the last saying that there had never been a cloud between him and the Prime Minister, through all their arduous work. All assented heartily to the expressions of good feeling, and I can record without hesitation

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my belief that a more united Cabinet than the one that has now been dissolved has never sat.

Beaconsfield went from the Cabinet to the Queen at Windsor and tendered his resignation, which was accepted. Her Majesty at once sought his advice on the nature of the statement she should make to Hartington, whom she summoned for the following afternoon.

From Queen Victoria.

WINDSOR CASTLE, *April* 21, 1880.—Will this do ?

Pray make any suggestion or alteration as this is only a draft.

Would it be well perhaps to say after 'Leader of the Opposition' 'who have been the cause of the defeat of her Govt.' or not ?

There are times when people should have no hearts or feelings; for *what* can be more cruel than for a female Sovereign no longer young, severely tried—without a husband or any *one* person on whose help (when her valued Minister leaves her) she can securely rest—to have to take those people who have done all they could to vilify and weaken her Govt. ? *Can* she have confidence in them ?

To Queen Victoria—Memorandum.

WINDSOR CASTLE, *April* [21], 1880.—It would seem expedient to address the individual called upon to form a new Ministry in this manner:

'The Opposition having successfully appealed to the country to turn out my Ministry, I now wish to know, whether you, the Leader of the Opposition, will undertake the administration of my affairs; and, in that case, how you propose to form your Cabinet ?'

This preamble will oblige the individual summoned to enter into details, both as to policy and persons, and then will be the time and the occasion for your Majesty to make remarks on individuals, and, without a too absolute or peremptory tone, which might be made by the person summoned an excuse to resign the task, for your Majesty to intimate any conditions which your Majesty may deem expedient.

The Queen conducted her conversation with Hartington in accordance with her outgoing Minister's counsel; but Hartington grievously disappointed both of them by telling Her Majesty that no Liberal Government could

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stand unless Gladstone was a member, and that he did not believe that Gladstone would accept any position but the first. Accordingly, in spite of her pressure and her insistence upon the want of confidence she felt in the Midlothian campaigner, he advised her to send for Gladstone. He consented, however, at Her Majesty's request, to put the question directly to Gladstone whether he would serve under either Granville or himself, and received the reply he expected. With Granville he returned to Windsor on the following day; and the two Whig leaders convinced the Queen that there was no other course but to apply to Gladstone, for whose personal devotion to Her Majesty they vouched. The Queen sent Beaconsfield a full memorandum of what passed at each of these two audiences; and when she was driven, in spite of her extreme reluctance, to accept Gladstone in the end as Prime Minister, sought and obtained her old friend's advice as to how she should treat him.

To Queen Victoria.

DOWNING STREET, *April* 23, 1880.—Lord Beaconsfield, with his humble duty, returns to your Majesty one of the most interesting State papers that he has ever perused.[1]

He has entire confidence, at this moment of terrible trial, in your Majesty's courage and wisdom.

(*Same date*).—. . . If the leaders of the Opposition shrink from the responsibility of their position, and confess their inability to form a Ministry, your Majesty should fix them with the responsibility of advising your Majesty to send for Mr. Gladstone.

If he have an audience, your Majesty should say:

'The Opposition having succeeded in defeating my Government, I have, in the spirit of the Constitution, sent for their leaders, who have confessed their inability to form a Ministry, and have advised me to send for you. I wish therefore to know, whether you are prepared to form an Administration?'

Lord Beaconsfield would advise your Majesty, in the first instance, to confine yourself to this question. Mr. Gladstone will, probably, be diffuse in his reply, which will give your Majesty advantage in ascertaining his real intentions.

[1] The account of Hartington's audience on April 22.

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If he be not diffuse, then your Majesty, if he replies in the affirmative, may proceed to enquire as to the policy he recommends, and the persons he will propose to carry it into effect.

April 24.—Lord Beaconsfield has read with the deepest interest the picturesque and living description of an interview, which will always form an important chapter in your Majesty's memorable reign and life.[1]

May Omnipotent Providence guide, guard, and sustain, your Majesty, at this trying moment!

Lord Beaconsfield, with his humble duty, received the cyphered telegram last evening, and the box afterwards—at night.

This is his last day in Downing Street. He goes to Hatfield to-morrow, until Tuesday, and then to Lord Beauchamp's if necessary still to remain in town.

After his final audience, he will endeavour to find repose in the woods of Hughenden; consolation he will find, always, in the recollection of your Majesty, and all your goodness to him.

While the Queen had thought it right to keep her outgoing Minister completely *au courant* of all the negotiations down to the acceptance of office by Gladstone, she appears to have been too constitutional to do more than send the bare results of her new Minister's audience, now that he had kissed hands. Here is the text of the telegram to which Beaconsfield's letter refers and of a short supplementary note which followed it.

From Queen Victoria.

(*Telegram*). WINDSOR, *April* 23.—I have seen Mr. Gladstone, who has accepted and kissed hands. He says he accepts all facts; and that bitterness of feeling is past.

(*Letter, same date*).—The Queen is touched by Lord Beaconsfield's kind words. Her trial is great. She forgot to say 2 things, 1st, that Mr. Gladstone looks very ill, very old and haggard and his voice feeble. 2ndly, That he said twice he looked to his not being long in office as it was too much for him, and being Leader and Chancellor of the Exchequer as well as Prime Minister is utterly too much for a man of 70!

On Sunday, April 25, Beaconsfield finally quitted Downing Street. He went that afternoon to Hatfield for a couple of days, and then, as he no longer had a house

[1] The account of the audience of Hartington and Granville on April 23.

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in town, stayed till the following Saturday as his friend Beauchamp's guest in Belgrave Square before retreating to Hughenden. From Hatfield he was summoned to Windsor for his farewell audience, 'to kiss hands on abdication,' as he wrote to Lady Chesterfield.

Memorandum by Queen Victoria.

WINDSOR CASTLE, *April* 27, 1880.—Saw Lord Beaconsfield at 3 and gave him a parting gift, my statuette in bronze, and the plaster casts of the group of Brown, the pony, and 'Sharp,' and the statuettes of Sharp and William Brown, all of which he had never seen and with which he expressed himself much delighted. We then talked of the new Government, which he thought very moderate, but which I told him I heard the Radicals were very indignant at! His intention, he said, was to impress upon his party, of whom he should have a large meeting before the opening of Parliament, not to attack the Government excepting when extreme measures were proposed, or any change in foreign policy. Otherwise they should let them alone. . . .

He would not come to town or to the drawing-room, and wished to 'keep out of sight,' only coming up when it was necessary for him to be in the House of Lords.

I then took leave of him, shaking hands, when he kissed mine. I would not consider this as a leave-taking, as I said I was sure to see him again before we left for Scotland, and that I begged he would always let me know his whereabouts so that I could always give him news of myself.

To Lady Bradford.

13, BELGRAVE SQUARE, *April* 28.—. . . Yesterday morning I was summoned to Windsor from Hatfield; a long, cold drive, but I picked up Lord Rowton *en route*.

My audience was very long, and everything was said that cd. be said; but what was news yesterday is scarcely so to-day, and I arrived back too late for post.

I cd. perceive there was something concealed from somebody, and hinted that; but the delusion existed that all was safe, and that no danger was to be apprehended of the presence of Lowe or Dilke. Instead of them, with[ou]t the slightest preparation for the catastrophe, she will be told that she must take this morning an avowed republican[1] for a Cabinet Minister, quite inexperienced in official life, and little known

[1] Chamberlain.

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in Parliament. It wd. have been better to have permitted Dilke to be one of her counsellors.

I shall leave town on Saturday, but latish, so that if you have a festival I will attend it, tho' I shd. have preferred saying Adieu alone.

To Anne Lady Chesterfield.

13, BELGRAVE SQUARE, *April* 29.—. . . I had not seen the article you sent me. I avoid newspapers which it was once my business to scan. I see only *The Times*—just to keep me *au fait* to what is going on. . . .

I am naturally a terribly bad letter-writer, and only the breath of official life kept me at all in epistolary cue. I am no longer *responsible* in any sense.

The audience on April 27 was only a farewell audience in name, as the Queen had her fallen Minister as her guest at Windsor three times in the remaining eight months of the year; during five of which months the Court was absent at Balmoral or Osborne. The first visit was on May 17-18, when the Queen, to whom he sat next at dinner, said, 'I feel so happy that I think what has happened is only a horrid dream.' The next was on July 15-16, when the Queen had returned from her spring visit to Balmoral, but had not yet started for Osborne. The visit, he told Lady Bradford, 'was most interesting and agreeable. I went there early and saw a great deal of my late, and gracious mistress. She looked ten years younger, and, as you say, quite pretty. She confessed she was perfectly well.' The third occasion was in December, after the Court had come south from its autumn sojourn in the Highlands. He was at Windsor from Wednesday to Friday, December 8 to 10, and he made the acquaintance there of a distinguished man whose exploits he had long admired. It was the last meeting of the Queen and her favourite Minister.

To Lady Bradford.

WINDSOR CASTLE, *Dec.* 10.—The Lyttons here, who are always agreeable, because they are intelligent; and the great hero, Sir Fred. Roberts, a little wiry man, not unlike poor Sir John Pakington at a distance, but a more determined

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countenance when you approach him. Yesterday he departed, and there came Genl. Ross, the second in command during the great march—a smaller man even than Sir Fredk., wiry little men who can mount and dismount with rapid ease. Somebody told me, however, that Roberts was so exhausted and unwell that he was obliged to be carried in a litter into Candahar, and having to fight a battle almost directly, he was on horseback during the fray, and cd. only sustain himself in his saddle by the beneficial aid of champagne. . . .

The Queen looks well, and is well, notwithstanding the danger of her realm. . . .

It was not only by frequent invitations to Windsor that the Queen showed her warm affection for Beaconsfield. She constantly kept up with him, as with no other ex-Minister since Melbourne, a confidential correspondence from which politics were by no means excluded; and she sought her trusted friend's counsel and consolation in the difficulties into which she was plunged by her new advisers. Her Majesty's letters were no longer in the formal third person traditionally employed between Sovereign and Minister, but were written as from friend to friend; beginning 'Dear Lord Beaconsfield,' and ending 'Ever your affectionate and grateful friend,' or 'Ever yours affectionately, V.R.I.' Constitutionally, it was a perilous experiment, as the Sovereign should accept advice on public affairs only from the Minister in office. But he must be a hardened Constitutionalist indeed who would refuse his sympathy to a widowed Queen, forced by what she held to be a sorely misguided public opinion to accept a Minister in whom she had little confidence; and Ministerial resentment and public scandal were prevented by Beaconsfield's prudence and discretion, and, it may be, by his death a year after his fall from office. A small selection from Her Majesty's letters will show their nature.

From Queen Victoria.

WINDSOR CASTLE, *May* 4, 1880.—I . . . cannot refrain from saying a few words on what is passing. The Council was extraordinary yesterday. . . . The other Ministers seem very anxious to be agreeable and not to reverse things. Mr. Childers has given the Duke of Cambridge satisfaction—

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as well as the other appointments to that office. Lord Northbrook—most amiable and desirous to meet my wishes. Lord Granville very desirous of acting in the present line. Sir H. Layard will probably have leave of absence and then *not* return; but Lord Salisbury himself advised *this*. There is great difficulty to find a successor. No one should be removed. Mr. Gladstone . . . is very desirous of being respectful and obliging. He looks very ill—walks with and leans on a stick. He laments his Cabinet is not as small as yours, which he considered most wise.

I enjoined the all-importance of secrecy in the Cabinet and instanced the mischief which had been done *formerly* by the reverse.

I often think of you—indeed constantly—and rejoice to see you looking down from the *wall* after dinner.

May 9.—. . . I think you may be easy about Foreign Affairs. Lord Granville manages them entirely and the P.M. never even names them to me, and I watch very carefully; he consults me very much. . . .

BALMORAL CASTLE, *Sept.* 1.—Your last kind letter interested me very much and I thank you warmly for it. You have the position fortunately still very much in your hands, and you *can* exercise, as you have done, a most beneficial influence over everyone.

Lord Granville also told me of the little dinner,[1] and how well you looked and seemed! This is a great pleasure for me to hear. . . .

Oct. 7.—Since I received your kind and interesting letters I have seen Lord Rowton, twice if not 3 times. . . . The complications in the East are most distressing. Turkey is very obstinate and dilatory, as we all know, but formerly she believed us to be her friend; now she thinks the very reverse, and much more so than really is the case. But Mr. Gladstone's language is the cause of all the evil. He is now seriously alarmed about Ireland and determined to proceed against the Land League if it is found possible. Lord Hartington is particularly strong about it. I am glad to say a great change is perceptible in their views about Afghanistan. There will be no rash or hasty action and the advice of really competent people will be heard, and I believe followed. . . .

Oct. 31.—It was a great pleasure to receive 2 kind letters, which are a proof that this dreadful gout has done your health no harm. May you continue as well through the winter, of which we had a most extraordinary unnatural foretaste! Such a long touch of it is quite unprecedented in Oct. here.

I am very much interested to hear of your new book[2]!

[1] See below, p. 590.

[2] *Endymion.*

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With so active a mind as yours and having for 6 years been so continually employed and overwhelmed with work, comparative idleness must have been very trying. I shall look anxiously forward to the promised copy which you so kindly say you will send to me.

As regards affairs they are sad indeed, and I hardly trust myself to speak of them—they are so confused and so dreadful! Oh! if only I had you, my kind friend and wise councillor and strong arm to help and lean on! I have *no one*. Lord Dufferin said to me, 'I feel so much for you, you never were so alone.' And it is so! . . .

OSBORNE, *Dec.* 20.—I trust I may be one of the first to wish you joy and many happy returns of your birthday—on which day I trust the sun will shine, which it did beautifully yesterday. To-day we have had, as well as last night, a fearful amount of very heavy rain, and I just hear of a heavy fall of snow at Windsor!

The state of Ireland continues to get worse and worse. But I may tell you that the Govt. are quite determined to bring in a Coercion Bill the very first thing and to push it through before anything else is proposed. Mr. Forster would have wished for measures far earlier and is terribly anxious. He made, as we had well known, terrible mistakes last session, but he is fully alive to the great dangers and difficulties of the case and wishes for powers to put it down. He is an honest man. . . .

He is not a man of the world—and his present office quite overwhelms him. The P. Minister was also far more impressed with the dangers of the position than I have yet seen him. But it ought never to have come to this pass. . . .

These letters are a forcible reminder that the change of government brought in its train few or none of those blessings which Gladstone had led the electors to expect. There was no cessation of foreign and imperial adventure; there was a marked increase in disastrous incidents. Domestic legislation had to be thrust aside to make way for the tragic necessities of Ireland; and the principal achievement in this sphere was the extension of household suffrage to the counties—an extension the principle of which Beaconsfield had accepted. An increase by the Beaconsfield Ministry of national expenditure from some seventy to some eighty millions a year had been denounced as profligate finance; it was a strange irony that

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there was a Budget of a hundred millions before the second Gladstone Ministry fell. Gladstone was even ready, over a frontier post in Afghanistan, to incur that risk of war with Russia which he had made it matter of grave reproach against Beaconsfield to have incurred over the fate of Constantinople and the Straits. And, throughout the five years that the new Ministry lasted, the foreign reputation of the country, which Beaconsfield had raised so high, was gradually frittered away—only to be restored, towards the close of the century, by the sagacious counsels of Beaconsfield's lieutenant and successor, Salisbury.

In short, subsequent history has gone far to justify the view which the Queen and most contemporary foreign statesmen took of the election of 1880; that it was a blunder of the democracy, misled by the almost apostolic fervour with which Gladstone arraigned Beaconsfield's Eastern and Indian policy as not merely ill-judged but absolutely wicked." It was perhaps the most conspicuous instance of Gladstone's tendency, in the latter half of his life, to believe and to preach that all the most important political questions involve moral issues. It was from this angle that he had treated the franchise and the Irish Church, and it was from this angle that he was, after Beaconsfield's death, to treat Home Rule. As a matter of fact, and as Disraeli saw, political questions seldom present clear-cut moral issues, so that you can definitely say that one course is morally right, the other morally wrong. But the politician who, like Gladstone and, in some measure, Bright, can persuade a serious and religious people like the English, and still more the Scotch, that such an issue is involved, has a tremendous electoral and Parliamentary advantage. This method of conducting political controversy was repugnant to Disraeli, who despised it as savouring of cant; hence, no doubt, came much of the suspicion and misconstruction which he was never able altogether to dispel. He took the common-sense view that in politics it is generally a

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question merely of the more expedient course; and that the prime duty of a British statesman is to regard British honour and promote British welfare.

Beaconsfield's achievements during his great Ministry in the furtherance of social reform and of imperial consolidation have been sufficiently expounded in the course of our narrative. But something may be added as to his methods as Prime Minister, though these stand out clearly enough from his correspondence with his Sovereign and with his principal colleagues. There was an extreme, an Eastern, ceremoniousness, as of one who respected alike his office and his audience; a ceremoniousness which was so marked in his latter days as to lead Lord Rosebery to describe those days as majestic. He never forgot the dignity of the office he held, or underestimated the importance of the decisions at which his Cabinet might arrive. In his demeanour, as in his attire, he played the part to the full. While he spared no pains to meet the difficulties and satisfy the scruples of individual colleagues, yet more and more, as the years went on and as he realised that it was on him rather than on them that the country placed its reliance, it became his practice in Cabinet to lay down a policy which he asked his colleagues to support, and from which in essentials he would not budge, rather than —as some Prime Ministers have done—to throw the burden upon them, and count heads to ascertain their disposition. He combined immense consideration with unshakable firmness.

But the firm grip which he kept on the aims of policy was compatible with an unfailing readiness to adopt new means. A man of infinite imagination, he abounded in fresh ideas and novel, if sometimes fantastic, expedients. As a rule he did not broach these crudely in Cabinet, but tested them in the first place in intimate converse with his most trusted lieutenants—Cairns, Derby, Salisbury, Hardy, or Northcote; and he showed no hesitation in yielding if convinced of their impracticability. But so

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penetrating was his insight, so keen his intuition, that, over and over again, he would light at once on the solution which had evaded the patient labour and logical faculty of a competent colleague. Contemptuous as he was of detail, and constitutionally unskilled in its manipulation, he could immerse himself in it, if necessary, with ardour and success, as he proved in his conduct of the Reform Bill of 1867 through the House of Commons. He had, indeed, a hawk's eye for what was really important, and shrank from no exertion or discomfort when he deemed it necessary to be prompt and vigorous. The reader cannot fail to have been struck with the keenness and thoroughness as well as the courage and resolution with which he faced each critical situation during his great Ministry.

In his individual dealings with his colleagues he was particularly happy. There is no surer test of a chief than his attitude towards a colleague who, acting in good faith, has made a blunder. Whether it was in Parliament or in administration, his instinct was always to support his lieutenant, however mistaken his view, and however awkward the Parliamentary difficulties in which the defaulter may have involved him and his Government. In spite of that defaulter's readiness to be thrown over, Beaconsfield would again and again take the blame on himself, chivalrously ignoring the temptation to sacrifice a scapegoat; and often, by his brilliant sally, would extricate the Government with credit from an apparently hopeless muddle. 'A chief like that commands loyalty,' was the tribute of colleague after colleague. Not only would he take on his own broad shoulders the blame for the mistakes of under-secretaries; but he would not allow promising youngsters in his team to be overridden, when they had a good case, by the Cabinet or the Treasury. Lord George Hamilton, in his *Parliamentary Reminiscences*, tells a delightful story of how, on his representation as Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education, Beaconsfield prevented the Cabinet and the Treasury from hampering the education of the

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country in a frantic desire to produce a popular Budget on the eve of a General Election. Lord George's estimates had been seriously mutilated early in 1880 behind his back by the Chancellor of the Exchequer with the connivance of the Lord President. The young Vice-President, failing redress from his immediate chief, carried his grievance direct to the Court of Appeal—that is, the Prime Minister.

I went to [Lord Beaconsfield] and described exactly what had occurred. He listened intently, and after a minute's reflection said: 'Is there not a thing that you call the Committee of Council upon Education?' 'Yes,' I said, 'there is.' 'Am I on it?' 'Yes.' 'Very well, then, tell the Lord President I wish it to be summoned at once.' It was summoned, and, I should think, for the first and last time in [its] existence, all the official members of this heterogeneous body met. We sat in a semicircle, Lord Beaconsfield in the centre, and I at the extreme outside. 'I understand,' said Lord Beaconsfield, 'that the Vice-President has a statement to make to us.' I then proceeded to state my case as best I could, letting down the Lord President and the Chancellor of the Exchequer as much as possible. When I had finished, there was a dead silence, whereupon Lord Beaconsfield remarked: 'I move that the Committee of Council on Education do agree with the Vice-President.' There was not a word of opposition to this motion, both the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Lord President looking rather foolish.[1]

Beaconsfield was a careful dispenser of Crown patronage and honours; and he prided himself upon avoiding what he considered to be Gladstone's lavishness in their distribution. There was often, as might have been expected, an imaginative touch about his selections, as in the offer of the G.C.B. to Carlyle, and in the appointment of the poet and diplomatist, Lytton, to the Viceroyalty of India, and of the Sovereign's son-in-law, Lorne, to the Governor-Generalship of Canada. In his ecclesiastical patronage during his second Ministry he observed the rule of fair division and comprehensiveness which he had laid down in 1868, but without that eye to immediate electoral advantage which was noticeable when the fate

[1] Lord G. Hamilton's *Parliamentary Reminiscences*, pp. 152-154.

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of the Irish Church was at stake.[1] He had been responsible for the promotion of Tait, Magee, Mansel, Merivale, and Christopher Wordsworth in 1868; between 1874 and 1880 the same tradition was preserved by the advancement of Benson, Maclagan, Lightfoot, Stubbs, and Ryle. In regard to patronage Fraser makes a most surprising charge against his hero. He writes: 'No rewards awaited those who had sacrificed everything in their support of him; no thought was given to them; they had served their purpose; and, except personal courtesy, they received no recompense of any sort or kind.'[2] Fraser must have been thinking of himself, but he was a gossip and a bore, not at all a suitable candidate for office. If Disraeli is open to any reproach, it is, as we should have expected in so stanch a friend, that he was perhaps too indiscriminate in rewarding those who had served him. Fraser can only think of the offer of a lordship-in-waiting to Lord Exmouth. He forgets that Disraeli secured appointments in the public service for both his brothers Ralph and James; that he obtained a baronetcy for Rose; that the Lyttons, father and son, were promoted to high office in the State; that he took John Manners, his 'Young England' comrade, into all his Cabinets, and gave him a red ribbon at the close, while gratifying another 'Young England' associate, Baillie Cochrane, with a peerage; that a peerage and a baronetcy were the rewards of Yarde Buller and Miles, two of his stoutest supporters for the Conservative leadership; that he promoted Lord Abergavenny from an earldom to a marquisate; that he braved public opinion by appointing his society friend, Lord Rosslyn, High Commissioner for the Church of Scotland; that he offered a peerage to Andrew Montagu; that he gave Earle office, and Corry a peerage; and that he astonished his colleagues in the Cabinet by the high positions in the public service for which he thought Henry Lennox was suitable. The list might be greatly extended.

One creditable mark of Beaconsfield's great Ministry

[1] See Vol. V., pp. 57-73. [2] Fraser, p. 34.

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should not pass unrecorded. It was the first Cabinet to concern itself seriously with imperial defence, which had been neglected ever since the withdrawal of imperial forces from the Colonies. Here the Prime Minister was in complete harmony with Carnarvon, who had made a special study of the subject.

To Lord Carnarvon.

CRICHEL, *Dec.* 8, '75.—. . . I look upon the restoration of our military relations with our Colonies as a question of high policy, which ought never to be absent from our thoughts. The question involves social, and political, as well as military, considerations; and you may rely on my earnest support of any steps, on your part, to accomplish this great end.

The near approach of war in 1878 forced the question to the front; and Beaconsfield appointed in the next year a strong Royal Commission, with Carnarvon, no longer a member of the Government, at its head, to consider the protection of British possessions and commerce abroad. The Commission, in the expert opinion of Lord Sydenham, the first Secretary of the Committee of Imperial Defence, 'marked a new departure in the national history.' Its three exhaustive Reports constituted the foundation on which was gradually built that system of imperial defence which was ultimately tested in the Great War, and not found wanting.

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CHAPTER XV.

ENDYMION.

1880.

At the time of his final farewell to power Beaconsfield was in his seventy-sixth year, and for long had maintained a desperate fight with the gout, asthma, and bronchitis which ever threatened to lay him low. But his spirit was still undefeated. Not content with the continuing labours of political leadership, he set to work at once to finish the novel which he had planned and begun as a consequence of the success of *Lothair*, but which he had abandoned for many years owing to engrossing political avocations. There was little for a Leader of Opposition in the House of Lords to do for some months; and Beaconsfield applied himself to composition with such steadiness that the manuscript was practically complete early in August. The negotiations with Longmans for its publication were placed entirely in Rowton's hands; and so successfully did he conduct them that the firm, whose original offer was £7,500, finally agreed, before even seeing the manuscript, to give for all rights in *Endymion* what they believed to be the largest sum ever till then paid for a work of fiction—£10,000: £2,500 on the delivery of the manuscript, and £7,500 on April 1, 1881—less than three weeks, as it happened, before Beaconsfield's death. The manuscript was delivered in September, and *Endymion* appeared on November 26. Rowton told Beaconsfield of the success of the negotiation when they were both attending a debate in the House of Lords.

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From Lord Rowton.

HOUSE OF LORDS, *Aug.* 4, '80.—There are things too big to impart in whispers! so I leave your side, just to write these words.

Longman has to-day offered *Ten Thousand Pounds* for *Endymion*.

I have accepted it! I cannot tell you what a pleasure it is to me to see my ardent ambition for you gratified!

And you have an added honor which may for ever remain without precedent.

To Lord Rowton.

HUGHENDEN, *Sept.* 14, 1880.—L[ongman] arrived here yesterday by 5 o'clock train, and proposed that 'our little business' should be transacted before dinner. I was ready: the MS. had been carefully revised, and the printer much assisted, so I hope I shall not have to trouble him much for revises. . . . The receipt was ready and the cheque drawn, or else I should have thought it this morning all a dream. I know no magic of the Middle Ages equal to it! And you are the Magician, best and dearest of friends! . . .

The first proof will arrive this day—no—yesterday week, and it will all be consummated, I understand, by the first week of October. . . .

Since I wrote this, L[ongman] has departed (10 o'clock train) with our young friend. Three businesslike packages, all in his portmanteaus. . .

Mr. Norton Longman kindly allows me to quote, in a slightly shortened form, from a memorandum which he drew up at the time, his humorous description of the fashion in which the momentous transaction was carried through. It was his second visit to Hughenden, as he had stayed there, after the conclusion of the agreement, for a week-end in August, and had then, under Rowton's guidance, inspected the manuscript. This time he found Beaconsfield quite alone, without either secretary or visitor, and in capital spirits.

Knowing I had to leave rather early the next morning, I ventured to suggest that it might be convenient for us to do our little business before dinner. The business *I* alluded to was connected with our bankers, but it is certain Ld. B.'s idea of the business was the formal delivery of the MS. to

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me. 'Oh yes, certainly,' was the reply to my suggestion. 'Of course, much better to get our business done, the sooner the better. Ah, let me see, how shall we manage?' I confess I did not quite understand his lordship's meaning, because everything seemed to me to be simple enough, so I said nothing, and waited for another cue, as it was clear to me Ld. B. was a little fidgety and rather excited. The formal delivery of his precious child appeared to be too much for him. 'Well, Mr. Longman,' continued the author in a somewhat low tone of voice, 'shall I ring for Mr. Baum, and have my study lighted?' Of course, I agreed and said, 'Yes, certainly,' but to my surprise his lordship turned to me and said, 'No, no, Mr. Longman, stop a minute. Mr. Baum knows nothing of this, and we must not excite his suspicion.[1] We must light the candles ourselves.' Feeling quite equal to this responsibility I simply said, 'Oh yes,' in rather a cheery voice, endeavouring to remove the idea, which appeared to be so prominent in his mind, that we were about to rob a church or do some such dreadful deed.

I followed him upstairs to his own apartment. He is very shortsighted, and I had to render him a great deal of assistance in finding and lighting the candles. 'We must light ALL the candles, Mr. Longman; I can't get on without plenty of light!' said Lord B., and continued; 'but we must have your room lighted also. But Mr. Baum can do that.' So Mr. B. was summoned and instructed to light my room. No sooner had Mr. Baum left us and the door been closed with special care than the distinguished author proceeded to lay open three red despatch boxes. Each volume was carefully tied up in red tape, and each in its own box. These well-known receptacles of secret information being emptied of their valuable contents, I felt a little anxious to know what was to come next. After a moment's pause he turned to me and said, 'Are you ready?' 'Oh yes,' I replied, 'I am quite ready, are you?' What was going to happen? Were we really going to rob a church? The air was full of mystery. 'Can you carry two?' he continued. 'Yes,' I replied, not saying one word more than was absolutely necessary. The door being opened—slowly, solemnly, carefully, mysteriously I followed the ex-Premier as he trod lightly along the passage, to my apartment! Having arrived safely, and closing the door with extra precaution, he remarked, 'I am most anxious

[1] Beaconsfield once described to Rose his experience of an old retainer—almost certainly Baum—thus: 'For the first five years he was with me I found him a most excellent servant; for the next five years he was a faithful and interesting friend; and for the last five years he has been a most indulgent master.'

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none of my servants should know anything of this; that is why I am so careful.'

'Well,' thought I to myself, 'so far, so good, but what is to come next?' This was the evening before dinner, and I did not of course leave the house until the next morning. The valuable burden having been deposited on the table, Ld. B. with a sigh of relief remarked, 'There; but what are you going to do with it?' This was a regular poser, as I had not the slightest idea what to do with so precious an article for some fifteen hours or so. A happy thought flashed across my mind. 'My Glad——' I luckily stopped in time—'bag!' But this notion only created fresh complications. My bag was nowhere to be found. It had simply vanished. Awful idea! Had Mr. Baum done this on purpose? Of course we could not ring to ask Mr. Baum what had become of it, as no doubt he would guess something was going on. We looked under the bed, in the wardrobes, in every corner; but no, nothing could be found until a brilliant idea came to the mind of the great statesman. 'Perhaps it is in the dressing-room, just outside here,' he said; and much to our relief it was. I immediately carried it off to my room, and there under the very eye of the author deposited the three volumes in my little portmanteau. After placing the 3rd volume in its temporary resting-place Lord B. turned to me and said, 'But, Mr. Longman, how about your wardrobe?' 'Oh, there will be plenty of room for that,' I replied. But this did not satisfy my host at all, and he pressed me to allow him to be of service. 'Mr. Baum can supply you with any variety of portmanteau, if you only ask him,' continued Lord B., but I assured his lordship it was quite unnecessary for me to trespass on his hospitality.

Having thus accomplished the solemn and complicated task of the formal delivery of the MS., but not without some difficulty, we returned to his lordship's room, and in a very few minutes I finished my part of the affair by paying him a cheque and taking his receipt.

The dominant idea in *Endymion* is the enormous, indeed decisive, importance of women in directing and moulding the life of man, and, particularly, political man. Looking back over his own career Beaconsfield realised all that he owed to his sister's discerning sympathy, to Mrs. Austen's encouragement and criticism, to his wife's devotion—and income, to Lady Blessington's and Lady Londonderry's friendship, to Mrs. Brydges Willyams's

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benevolence, and to the atmosphere of sympathy and appreciation which had been provided for his declining years through his intimacy with Lady Bradford and Lady Chesterfield and through the gracious indulgence of his Queen. His debt to women was no doubt great; but his inherent genius, his patient labour, and his indomitable will were, after all, the main factors in his astonishing success. It pleased him, in certain moods, to say, as he did once in a letter to Lady Bradford, 'I owe everything to woman'; but, of him, it was not true. Of Endymion, the hero of his last novel, however, it is true. Had it not been for Myra, his virile sister; for Lady Montfort, the leader of society who marries him; and, in a lesser degree, for Adriana Neuchatel, the banker's daughter, and for Lady Beaumaris, transformed by a fortunate marriage from a lodging-house keeper's daughter into a Tory *grande dame*, Endymion would have spent his days in a second-rate Government office, rising gradually by a good address and a punctual discharge of duty to an assistant-secretaryship and a pension. Thanks to the influence of these women, he becomes, at about the age of forty, Prime Minister of Great Britain.

His story may be told in few words. Born in 1819, the grandson of a successful Civil Servant, and the son of a politician at one time of much promise—who, having lived far beyond his means and having made the mistake of attaching himself to Wellington rather than to Canning or to Grey, was hopelessly ruined and driven ultimately to suicide by the Reform Act of 1832—Endymion Ferrars could get no better start in life than a clerkship in Somerset House at the age of sixteen. But he has a twin sister, Myra, who is depicted as the embodiment of irresistible will, and who determines from her girlhood to devote her life to promoting her brother's career. 'I shall be in the world,' she says when rejecting as a girl of seventeen her first suitor, 'whatever be my lot, high or low—the active, stirring world—working for him, thinking only of him. Yes: moulding events and circumstances

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in his favour.' Though left, like her brother, penniless at their parents' death, she, by a turn of fortune's wheel, meets, and wins the affections of, an elderly statesman of great distinction, then Foreign Secretary, and at the age of nineteen marries him, largely with the object of advancing her brother's interests. 'Our degradation is over,' she tells Endymion. 'I see a career, ay, and a great one; and what is far more important, I see a career for you. . . . We have now got a lever to move the world.' Her new status, as Lady Roehampton, gives her brother at once the entry into society, and her influence procures him, first, the private secretaryship to one of her husband's colleagues, together with a transfer to a Government office of a higher class, and afterwards, at the age of twenty-six, the under-secretaryship for foreign affairs under her husband. The opening having been provided by his sister, the rest of Endymion's rise to greatness is mainly due to Lady Montfort, 'the famous Berengaria, Queen of Society, and the genius of Whiggism.' This powerful personage takes him up from his first appearance in society, pushes him both socially and politically, finds him a seat in Parliament, and finally, when her immensely rich husband has conveniently died and left her everything except the settled estates, bestows herself and all her possessions on her *protégé*, thus giving him an unassailable position, 'a root in the country.' Meanwhile his sister, early left a widow, has become by her second marriage the Queen Consort of a friendly Sovereign. No wonder that before long Endymion is appointed Foreign Secretary and that when the curtain is rung down he has just kissed hands at Windsor as Prime Minister. Towards the seat in Parliament, it should be added, Endymion received substantial assistance from the two other ladies. Lady Beaumaris, from the Tory camp, staved off an opposition that might have proved fatal; and the wealthy Adriana Neuchatel, by a timely but anonymous investment of £20,000 on his behalf in Consols, put him in a pecuniary position to avail himself of the opportunity.

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A hero of this kind could hardly fail to be colourless and insipid. We are told that, besides being good-looking and pleasant-mannered, he was 'intelligent and well informed, without any alarming originality or too positive convictions'; that he was 'prudent and plastic'; that he 'always did and said the right thing.' He is, indeed, the industrious apprentice *in excelsis;* but he has no resolution, no *élan*, no sparkle, no genius, and is as different as well can be from the brilliant and adventurous heroes of Disraeli's earlier novels, such as Vivian Grey, Contarini Fleming, and Coningsby. It is rather surprising that Dilke should have been gratified by the belief that Endymion's political career had been largely modelled on his own; a belief which Beaconsfield himself encouraged in conversation. For the story of Endymion's progress to the helm of State is a fairy tale which cannot be accepted as possible or credible; it can make no converts to the theory of the omnipotence of female influence in the world.

Myra, Endymion's resolute sister, is also a failure; but Lady Montfort, his other principal patroness, is alive and charming. Some of her characteristics may have been derived from recollections of Mrs. Norton, Lord Melbourne's friend; in a few particulars Beaconsfield seems to be drawing on his experiences with Lady Bradford. Lord Montfort, her husband, is also a well-conceived and well-presented character.

> Lord Montfort was the only living Englishman who gave one an idea of the nobleman of the eighteenth century. He was totally devoid of the sense of responsibility, and he looked what he resembled. . . .
>
> No one could say Lord Montfort was a bad-hearted man, for he had no heart. He was good-natured, provided it brought him no inconvenience; and as for temper, his was never disturbed, but this not from sweetness of disposition, rather from a contemptuous fine taste, which assured him that a gentleman should never be deprived of tranquillity in a world where nothing was of the slightest consequence.

In spite, indeed, of the unconvincing presentation of the main argument, *Endymion* is full of interest. It

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contains much brilliant writing and characterisation; and it throws many informing sidelights on its author's point of view and on society and politics in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. For the book is a curious blend of history and fiction. In his old age, Beaconsfield looks back with fondness to the period of his vigorous manhood, and places the creations of his fancy in the world which was familiar to him when he was in the twenties, thirties, and forties. Starting from Canning's death in 1827, the story wends its way with a background of the authentic domestic politics of the time down to the defeat of the Coalition in 1855. From that point—which is not, however, reached till the last dozen pages—the whole becomes romance, and neither Sidney Wilton's premiership, nor Endymion's succession to him, has any counterpart in the history of the late fifties. To the historical portions of the book it is unnecessary to refer at length, as they have been abundantly quoted in the first three volumes of this biography. It may, however, perhaps be said that the opening chapters, dealing with the effects of Canning's death and with the troubled politics of the next five years, are particularly striking and vigorous, having been written presumably before the pressure of public work compelled the author, in 1872 or 1873, to lay the manuscript aside. There are, moreover, some admirable sketches of social movements, the recollection of which had almost faded away even in 1880: the agitation in 1850-51 over the Papal aggression; that high fantastical show, the Eglinton Tournament (called here the Montfort Tournament) of 1839, about which Disraeli obtained information in 1872 from Jane Duchess of Somerset, who had, as Lady Seymour, presided over the tournament; and the railway mania of the forties, when 'a new channel' was found for capital and labour, and gigantic fortunes were made—and lost.

Though Endymion is not in the least like his creator in character or career, he is given in the latter chapters, somewhat incongruously, qualities, feelings, and habits

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which Beaconsfield had observed in himself. 'The power and melody of his voice'; his readiness without excessive fluency in debate; his power of keen sarcasm, 'that dangerous, though most effective, weapon,' held in severe check; his complete control of his temper—for these Disraelian qualities the earlier history of Endymion had little prepared the reader. And Beaconsfield was surely thinking of himself rather than of Endymion when he wrote: 'there was nothing for him to do but to plunge into business: and affairs of State are a cure for many cares and sorrows. What are our petty annoyances and griefs when we have to guard the fortunes and the honour of a nation?' Intimate and family dinners during the session with the Bradfords and with Lady Chesterfield must have been in his mind when he wrote of Endymion's difficulties in getting away from the House when in office: 'No little runnings up to Montfort House or Hill Street just to tell them the authentic news, or snatch a hasty repast with furtive delight, with persons still more delightful.'

The experience of the statesman who has taken his full share in the direction of great affairs pervades the book. The importance, for the art of government, of personal knowledge of foreign statesmen comes with effect from one who played a leading part at the Congress of Berlin. There, as his Lord Roehampton at Vienna, 'he learned to gauge the men who govern the world.' 'Conducting affairs without this knowledge is, in effect, an affair of stationery; it is pens and paper who are in communication, not human beings.' To the retrospective statesman, 'the finest elements in the management of men and affairs' seem to be 'observation and perception of character.' He blames Peel for not trusting youth: 'it is a confidence which should be exercised, particularly in the conduct of a popular assembly.' He himself had shown it in many cases, notably those of Lord George Hamilton and Edward Stanhope. He looks, almost with complacency, on the confusion of his private affairs which

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had pursued him throughout life. 'That seems almost the inevitable result of being absorbed in the great business of governing mankind.' He does not neglect in his reflections, as he did not in his life, the question of dress. Mr. Vigo tells Endymion, 'You must dress according to your age, your pursuits, your object in life. . . . In youth, a little fancy is rather expected, but, if political life be your object, it should be avoided, at least after one and twenty.' Disraeli himself had postponed the change till he was forty. Other personal touches may be noted. He ascribes to his heroine Myra that 'passion for light,' even when alone, which he felt himself; the belief that brilliant illumination had a beneficial moral effect on the temperament. He had his own talk in mind when he defined the art of conversation thus: 'to be prompt without being stubborn, to refute without argument, and to clothe grave matters in a motley garb.' His own ambition, his belief in the power of will, and in the utilisation of opportunity, find extreme and uncompromising utterance in Myra's words: 'A human being with a settled purpose must accomplish it.' 'Nothing can resist a will that will stake even existence for its fulfilment.' 'Power, and power alone, should be your absorbing object, and all the accidents and incidents of life should only be considered with reference to that main result.' 'Great men should think of Opportunity, and not of Time. Time is the excuse of feeble and tired spirits. They make time the sleeping partner of their lives to accomplish what ought to be achieved by their own will.' There is also, no doubt, something of Beaconsfield's own sentiment about religion in the views which he borrows from the wits of the past and puts into the mouth of Waldershare: 'Sensible men are all of the same religion.' 'And pray, what is that?' 'Sensible men never tell.'[1] An absolute reticence as to his personal religion was one

[1] Lord Fitzmaurice, in his *Life of Lord Granville*, points out that this passage is a reproduction of Speaker Onslow's footnote to Burnet's character of Shaftesbury in his *History of His Own Time*, Vol. I., p. 164.

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of Beaconsfield's marked characteristics, though he has told us much of his ideals in this sphere in *Tancred* and *Lord George Bentinck*.

Though not so full of 'quotations' as *Lothair*, *Endymion* yet contains many sententious phrases of the right Disraelian mintage. In the political sphere we hear of 'the commonplaces of middle-class ambition, which are humorously called democratic opinions'; in the social sphere, of 'a Knight of the Garter or a member of White's —the only two things an Englishman cannot command.' And here are two admirable aphorisms: 'Inquirers who are always inquiring never learn anything'; 'A dinner of wits is proverbially a palace of silence.'

The Queen was puzzled to find the hero of the Tory leader's last novel a Whig. And, indeed, it is a mark of the detachment with which the book is written, that the history of from 1827 to 1855 is treated from the Whig standpoint, and, so to speak, from within the Whig camp; and that in Waldershare the opinions of the 'Young England' party, with which Disraeli himself sympathised, are put forward in a bizarre and extravagant manner, calculated rather to provoke laughter than to win acceptance. Take Waldershare's dogma about foreign policy: 'All diplomacy since the Treaty of Utrecht seems to me to be fiddle faddle.' Or his lament over the disappearance of 'pottles' of strawberries: 'I believe they went out, like all good things, with the Stuarts.' Or his paradoxes about the navy—

> I must say it was a grand idea of our kings making themselves Sovereigns of the sea. The greater portion of this planet is water; so we at once became a first-rate power. We owe our navy entirely to the Stuarts. King James the Second was the true founder and hero of the British navy. He was the worthy son of his admirable father, that blessed Martyr, the restorer at least, if not the inventor, of ship money; the most patriotic and popular tax that ever was devised by man. The Nonconformists thought themselves so wise in resisting it, and they have got the naval estimates instead!

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Not indeed that the Whig conventions are too seriously respected. 'The cause for which Hampden died on the field, and Sidney on the scaffold' is identified, not with the liberties of the subject, but with 'the Whig Government of England'; and the typical magnate of this great historical connection would be, we are given to understand, 'a haughty Whig peer, proud of his order, prouder of his party . . . freezing with arrogant reserve and condescending politeness.' Of Melbourne's dissolution in 1841 Beaconsfield writes: 'It was unusual, almost unconstitutional, thus to terminate the body they had created. Nevertheless, the Whigs, never too delicate in such matters, thought they had a chance, and determined not to lose it.'

More perhaps than in any other of his novels did Beaconsfield in *Endymion* draw his characters from the life.[1] That Waldershare was a full-length portrait of George Smythe has been already pointed out.[2] Smythe's very words in a speech at Canterbury in 1847, reprinted in 1875 in the memoir of him prefixed to his novel *Angela Pisani*, about the Tory party being a succession of heroic spirits, are put into Waldershare's mouth in *Endymion*, so that no concealment whatever was affected. Then Lord Roehampton, so far as his public action as Foreign Minister is concerned, was, as we have seen, a flattering portrait of Palmerston. Zenobia, 'the queen of London, of fashion, and of the Tory party,' was drawn from Lady Jersey. Sidney Wilton, Endymion's Ministerial chief. 'a man of noble disposition, fine manners, considerable culture'—'a great gentleman'—inevitably recalled, by name and character, Sidney Herbert, the Peelite statesman. The great financial family, the Neuchatels, represent the Rothschilds under a thin disguise, though the Jewish element is dropped, and the founder described as a Swiss.

[1] It is impossible to take very seriously Disraeli's frequent protests against the identification of his characters with living individuals. 'When I write,' he once told Lady Chesterfield, 'I never introduce photographs of any living character, tho' it is impossible, when dealing with human nature, not to appropriate some human traits.' See Vol. I., pp. 91–93.

[2] See Vol. II., p. 162.

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Hainault House, with its magnificent stables, park, gardens, and conservatories, and a *chef* who was the 'greatest celebrity of Europe'—all within an hour's drive of the City—is a glorified reflection of Gunnersbury. There Beaconsfield had often enjoyed such week-end parties and dinners as are depicted in *Endymion*. Adrian Neuchatel himself, who combined the financial genius of the family with culture and political ambition, is painted pretty directly from the author's friend, Baron Lionel. In Nigel Penruddock, the Anglican clergyman who, despairing of the 'chance of becoming a Laud,' submits to Rome and becomes a Cardinal, Disraeli repaired any injustice he may be thought to have done Manning in his picture of Cardinal Grandison in *Lothair*. 'A smiling ascetic,' he 'was seen everywhere, even at fashionable assemblies'; but the conversion of England was 'his constant purpose and his daily and nightly prayer.' In Job Thornberry there are touches both of Cobden and of Bright; and fleeting memories of the brothers Bulwer in that amusing pair, Mr. Bertie Tremaine and Mr. Tremaine Bertie. Mr. Vigo is an incongruous blend of Poole, the tailor, and Hudson, the 'railway king.'

Thackeray fares as badly at Beaconsfield's hands in *Endymion* as Croker had fared in old days in *Coningsby*. Thackeray had burlesqued Disraeli's style in *Novels by Eminent Hands*, 'Codlingsby by D. Shrewsberry Esq.'—a skit which was originally published in *Punch*. It was not a very happy or satisfying performance, although thoroughly in harmony with *Punch's* whole attitude to Disraeli in his earlier days. But Thackeray had subsequently, in two speeches at the Royal Literary Fund dinner in 1851 and 1852, shown appreciation of the credit which Disraeli's career reflected on the whole profession of novel-writing. What he said in 1852 has been already quoted in Volume III.[1] In 1851 he said:

> If you will but look at the novelists of the present day, I think you will see it is altogether out of the question to pity

[1] P. 347.

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them. We will take in the first instance, if you please, a great novelist who is the great head of a great party in a great assembly in the country. When this celebrated man went into his county and proposed to represent it, and was asked on what interest he stood, he nobly said he stood on his head. And I want to know who can deny the gallantry and brilliancy of that eminent crest of his, and question the merit of Mr. Disraeli.

Thackeray himself sent a copy of the speech to Mrs. Disraeli as a proof 'that some authors can praise other authors behind their backs.' After these handsome compliments, it was perhaps rather ill-natured of Beaconsfield, in his turn, to burlesque Thackeray as St. Barbe, 'the vainest, most envious, most amusing of men.' That there was something of the snob in the immortal author of the *Book of Snobs* himself may be admitted. But the exaggeration of this quality in St. Barbe makes the caricature almost unrecognisable. On the other hand, few characters in the book are in themselves more vivid and diverting.

Two characters represent, with more or less fidelity, the two most eminent foreign statesmen with whom Disraeli had to deal, Napoleon III. and Bismarck. The plots and vicissitudes which diversified Louis Napoleon's exile are reproduced in the career of the pretender, Prince Florestan, who first appears in London society as Count Albert, a mysterious, silent, and solitary figure. An inveterate and shifty conspirator from his boyhood, he excuses the breach of his solemn parole by the plea that he is 'the child of destiny,' that his action was 'the natural development of the irresistible principle of historical necessity'; but he is a romantic personality who interests women, being gifted with tender and gentle manners, and ready with unobtrusive sympathy, save when lost in profound abstraction. When he set up house in London in his own name, 'it was the fashion among the *crème de la crème* to keep aloof from him. The Tories did not love revolutionary dynasties, and the Whigs being in office could not sanction a pretender, and one who, they significantly intimated with a charitable shrug of the shoulders.

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was not a very scrupulous one.' He promoted his cause by political dinners, at which he 'encouraged conversation, though himself inclined to taciturnity. When he did speak, his terse remarks and condensed views were striking, and were remembered.' The year of revolution, 1848, gave him back his father's throne; and, like Louis Napoleon, he established a Government 'liberal but discreet, and, though conciliatory, firm'; declared for an English alliance; and tried, but failed, to marry into a Continental reigning house.

Both Florestan and Count Ferroll, who stands for Bismarck, were at the Montfort Tournament, as Louis Napoleon certainly attended the Eglinton Tournament; and they were the most successful knights in the jousting. The Prince recognised that Ferroll and he would have to contend for many things more precious than golden helms before they died. Ferroll, said the Prince, 'is a man neither to love nor to detest. He has himself an intelligence superior to all passion, I might say all feeling; and if, in dealing with such a being, we ourselves have either, we give him an advantage.'

Florestan's attitude of detached admiration is the attitude which Beaconsfield preserves himself towards his Bismarck-Ferroll—'a man of an original not to say eccentric turn of mind,' 'a man who seldom makes a mistake.' There is a vivid presentment of the great man's appearance in early middle age. 'Though not to be described as a handsome man, his countenance was striking; a brow of much intellectual development, and a massive jaw. He was tall, broad-shouldered, with a slender waist.' At that time he was 'brooding over the position of what he could scarcely call his country, but rather an aggregation of lands baptised by protocols, and christened and consolidated by treaties which he looked upon as eminently untrustworthy.' Ferroll reveals in a conversation with Lady Montfort the Bismarckian methods by which this unsatisfactory state of things was to be remedied.

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'My worthy master wants me to return home and be Minister; I am to fashion for him a new constitution. I will never have anything to do with new constitutions; their inventors are always the first victims. Instead of making a constitution, he should make a country, and convert his heterogeneous domains into a patriotic dominion.'

'But how is that to be done?'

'There is only one way; by blood and iron.'

'My dear Count, you shock me.'

'I shall have to shock you a great deal more, before the inevitable is brought about.'

Europe, Ferroll told Endymion on another occasion, 'is a geographical expression. There is no State in Europe; I exclude your own country, which belongs to every division of the globe, and is fast becoming more commercial than political, and I exclude Russia, for she is essentially Oriental, and her future will be entirely in the East.' As for Germany, he could not find it on the maps. It was practically as weak as Italy. 'We have some kingdoms who are allowed to play at being first-rate powers; but it is only play.' 'Then is France periodically to overrun Europe?' asks Endymion. 'So long as it continues to be merely Europe,' is the answer.

Rowton tells us that *Endymion* is named after Endymion Porter, the royalist friend of Davenant, Dekker, and Herrick, who was apparently an ancestor of Lady Beaconsfield's. It is possible that the original suggestion arose in this way. But it may be pointed out that the choice of *Endymion* for the title of a book written to glorify female influence over male careers, and for the name of its hero, was a kind of cryptic dedication of the volumes to 'Selina Bradford'; as, of course, in Greek mythology, Endymion was the human lover of Selene, the Moon Goddess. The selection must have appealed to Beaconsfield's ironical humour; as one of the few imperfections he found in Lady Bradford was an inability to appreciate his novels, and she would almost certainly fail to understand the compliment unless he pointed it out to her.

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To Lady de Rothschild.[1]

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Nov.* 21, '80.—I always think there is something very egotistical in a writer presenting his work to another person. It is an offering that should be reserved for our dearest friends, for they will not misinterpret the motive, or attribute to arrogance what springs from affection.

Do me, therefore, the honor of receiving *Endymion*, when he calls to-day, or to-morrow; and if I might venture to do so, I would ask the favor, at your convenience, of conveying to me some of your impressions in reading it. I particularly ask this, not only because I have confidence in your intelligence and always welcome criticism, but because this is the first work wh. I ever published without the preliminary advantage of a female counsellor, an advantage which, I know from experience, is inestimable.

I fear the young gentleman will not reach you till Tuesday

From the Princess of Wales.

SANDRINGHAM, NORFOLK, *Nov. 29th*, 1880.

DEAR LORD BEACONSFIELD,

It is not from want of appreciation of your most interesting and valuable present, that I have delayed some days thanking you for it—but I was absent from home when your book arrived and only found it here on my return Saturday afternoon.

I cannot, I am afraid, flatter myself at having had any share in the book beyond having suggested years ago 'the title,' 'Sympathy,' which I see, however, you have *not* adopted, so, alas! I have no claims whatever to go down to posterity as joint author of *Endymion*.

But, joking apart, I am looking forward to spending many most agreeable hours with one of the best authors of the century. May I only ask you still further to enhance the value of the book by writing your name in it when we next meet?—Believe me, dear Lord Beaconsfield, Yrs. sincerely,—ALEXANDRA.

High appreciation of *Endymion* was expressed by both the distinguished men who had served under Beaconsfield as Foreign Secretary. Derby told Northcote at Grillion's that 'there were three remarkable things about it. (1) He knew no other novel in English written by a man of 75,

[1] Now Lady Rothschild, widow of Nathaniel, 1st Lord Rothschild, Disraeli's friend and executor.

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or (2) published 50 years after a former novel by the same author, or (3) written by a man after he had been Prime Minister (except, of course, *Lothair*).' And Salisbury wrote gracefully to Beaconsfield on December 1: 'You must let me congratulate you on the universal popularity of *Endymion*. Many people think it the best you have written—a judgment in which I should agree, if I ventured upon an opinion in matters critical.' But the book, like others of Disraeli's writings, displeased many a serious reader. Archbishop Tait confided to his diary, 'I have finished *Endymion* with a painful feeling that the writer considers all political life as mere play and gambling.' And a valued correspondent of W. H. Smith wrote: 'The reader cannot refrain from the disagreeable conclusion that the writer holds the world as a mere plaything, for his special amusement and contempt by turns.' There was, of course, much of this sardonic humour in Disraeli, and free vent is given to it in *Endymion*. The hero, in particular, seems to have no political views save those which are pumped into him by others. But that Disraeli had high ideals, and the will to make them prevail, was shown by many previous books, especially the trilogy of *Coningsby*, *Sybil*, and *Tancred*, and by the administration and legislation for which he was responsible. It is not unnatural that, in the evening of life, he should have written in a lighter, even in a trifling, vein.

In accepting Messrs. Longmans' 'truly liberal offer' of £10,000 for *Endymion*, Beaconsfield wrote, on August 7, that he was convinced that the firm would have no cause to regret the enterprise. The interest which the book excited appeared to justify this hope. Mudie put his name down for 3,000 copies, which Mr. Longman believed to be unprecedented; and the number of copies printed for the first edition was 10,500, which the publisher thought 'simply gigantic.' But on the day of publication, November 26, Beaconsfield was less sanguine. He wrote to Lady Bradford: 'I confess I accepted [the £10,000]

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with a scruple, such a sum never having before been given for a work of fiction, or indeed any other work. I fear it will prove rather the skill of Monty's diplomacy than Mr. Longman's business acumen. If so, my conscience will force me to disgorge.' The premature publication of a review, in the *Standard*, greatly annoyed both author and publisher, and may have interfered with the sales. But the reviews were generally favourable. Beaconsfield reported progress to Rowton in Algiers.

To Lord Rowton.

HUGHENDEN, *Dec.* 6, '80.—. . . As for private affairs, I can't give you the definite information I could wish. His [Longman's] original plan of the campaign turned out to be a right one. The response was enormous, but something happened about the *Standard*, which, according to his view, has played the devil. I can't attempt to go into the story.

As for literary verdict, very generally in favor.

But as for society, I can say nothing. I am a hermit and see nobody. Those, the very few, to whom it was given, send, of course, mechanical applause. All the gossips, who would have told us the talk of the town . . . are silent, because they are sulky at not having received it. . . .

By March, 1881, Beaconsfield had definite reason to fear that the novel had not been a commercial success; and he therefore generously volunteered, through Rowton, to cancel the agreement, and fall back on the arrangement made in the case of *Lothair*, a royalty of 10s. in the £ on all copies sold. This proposal amounted, in the publisher's opinion, to making the firm a present of £3,000. Mr. Longman at once replied that it was true that the three-volume edition of *Endymion* had not been the commercial success that the three-volume edition of *Lothair* was; but that the firm had made their offer with their eyes open and the result had quite answered their expectations; and that they could not think of availing themselves of Beaconsfield's liberal and considerate suggestion. The story, creditable in a high degree to both author and publisher, had an appropriate and felicitous sequel.

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The popular 6s. edition of *Endymion*, which was on sale during the early months of the year, was more successful even than the popular edition of *Lothair* had been. On March 24 Mr. Longman was able to report to Beaconsfield that over 8,000 copies had been disposed of; and early in April the debt on the book had been completely worked off. Beaconsfield had by this time been overtaken by his fatal illness; but Mr. Longman sent the facts to Rowton, who was able to brighten one of his dying friend's last days with the good news. 'This was the last business transaction I ever had with my dear chief,' was Rowton's endorsement on Mr. Longman's letter.

Beaconsfield did not lay down his pen when he had finished *Endymion*. He promptly started a new novel, of which he had completed nine short chapters before his death. This unfinished work is printed as an Appendix to Volume V. It promised to be a story rather in the manner of *Lothair* than in that of *Endymion*. There was no return to the memories of the author's youth and middle age; but the action was represented as taking place in the present or the immediate past, Lothair himself being mentioned, and his friends Lady Clanmorne and Hugo Bohun being introduced. Detailed critical comment on a work in which Beaconsfield had only posed the characters, and had hardly yet begun to set them in motion, would be absurd. But it may confidently be said that this fragment bears no sign of failing power; the peculiar qualities which give their savour to the Disraeli novel are all present. Attention may be specially directed to two points. The central figure was unmistakably drawn from the rival who had just pulled Beaconsfield down, and seated himself in triumph in his place. Joseph Toplady Falconet, sprung from a well-to-do commercial family; a young man with a remarkable power of acquisition, a vigorous and retentive memory, a disputatious and arrogant temper, an immense flow of language, and no sense of humour whatever; who carried all before him at public school and University, and then

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was immediately brought by the noble patron of a small borough into Parliament; who, 'firm in his faith in an age of dissolving creeds, wished to believe that he was the man ordained'—but only as a lay champion—'to vindicate the sublime cause of religious truth':—can there be a doubt that we have here a picture of the youthful Gladstone, only with his birth post-dated by nearly half-a-century? It is indeed a loss that we can never know how Falconet's character was intended to be developed, and what adventures were to be his in love, politics, and religion.

The other point that cannot fail to attract the reader's notice is the prominence given to a sort of philosophy of despair, destruction, and anarchism. No fewer than four of the characters profess it in some form or another; a Great Unknown, a personage near akin to the unique Sidonia; a German millionaire of philosophic tendencies; a charming, but hopelessly impracticable, heir to a peerage; and a Buddhist missionary from Ceylon. These all accept, in differing degrees, the doctrine that the future must be secured by destroying the present, that the human race is exhausted, that destruction in every form must be welcomed. We may perhaps trace here the profound impression made on Beaconsfield by the Nihilist conspiracy in Russia, which succeeded in murdering Alexander while this unfinished novel was in the making. It was a movement that carried to a further pitch that political and religious Revolution in Europe, of which we know from *Lothair* that he was a keen observer. One sentence, which drops from the lips of the Buddhist Kusinara, represents a sentiment that may well have been in the writer's mind in his last days: 'Death is only happiness, if understood.'

With the close of the first paragraph of chapter 10 the pen dropped from Beaconsfield's hand. It was fifty-six years since his first publication, a pamphlet on American mining companies, and fifty-five years since the appearance of *Vivian Grey*, which brought him public notoriety. The

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story goes that someone asked Disraeli in later life what had become of Vivian Grey, and received the delightful reply: 'There was no inquest; it is believed that he survives.' In a sense most of his heroes survived in him —Vivian Grey, Contarini Fleming, Coningsby, Tancred, and the rest. It is this aspect of his novels that has made it necessary to analyse them at greater length than is usual in biographies. Without a study of his books, it is impossible to understand his life. They all abound in illustrations of distinctive qualities of his mind and character; they all, with hardly an exception, are closely interwoven with the experiences of his personal or his political career. 'My books,' he once wrote to Lady Bradford, 'are the history of my life. I don't mean a vulgar photograph of incidents, but the psychological development of my character. Self-inspiration may be egotistical, but it is generally true.' Remarkable as Disraeli's books are as literary creations, they are indispensable to the biographer as emanations from the creative artist behind them.

Perhaps this quality of these unique works has been responsible for their under-valuation as literature. Few critics have been able to regard them with a single eye for their literary merits. Sir Leslie Stephen writes enthusiastically of some of their features, especially of the irony which pervades them. 'This ambiguous hovering between two meanings,' he says, 'this oscillation between the ironical and the serious, is always amusing, and sometimes delightful. . . . The texture of Mr. Disraeli's writings is so ingeniously shot with irony and serious sentiment that each tint may predominate by turns. Mr. Disraeli is not exactly a humourist, but something for which the rough nomenclature of critics has not yet provided a distinctive name.' Yet even Stephen, with all his appreciation, suggests that the novels represent promise, rather than performance; and are only an earnest of what might have been creative work of permanent value, had not their writer unfor-

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tunately subordinated his literary to his political career. This judgment seems to be demonstrably mistaken. The novels of Disraeli's first period, while he was largely supporting himself by his pen, and hesitating as to his ultimate career, would hardly, interesting as they are, secure for him of themselves a permanent place in literary history. That place is his as the creator, and to some minds the sole really successful practitioner, of a new *genre*, the Political Novel. It was only in his second period, after he had become an active politician, that he could have produced *Coningsby*, *Sybil*, and *Tancred;* only in his third period, when he had garnered the experience of a statesman, that he could have written *Lothair* and *Endymion*. On the basis of this performance we can definitely claim for him, apart altogether from his political eminence, a durable place as—in Mr. Edmund Gosse's phrase—a minor classic of English Literature. A graceful tribute, associating Disraeli's work with that of one of the brightest luminaries of letters, was once paid him by a doughty antagonist in the Lords, himself with some claim to the title of a literary statesman. The Duke of Argyll wrote to Beaconsfield on January 1, 1878: 'You have written enough, I hope, to last me for all the assaults of that foe [the gout]; I used to keep Scott's novels as my *vis medicatrix*, and now I keep yours.'

What Disraeli himself particularly appreciated in literature was style—a quality which distinguished some portions of his own work, but of which unfortunately his command was limited and uncertain. He elaborated his views at some length in a letter written while he was reading J. A. Symonds's *Renaissance in Italy*.

To Lady Bradford.

Bretby, *Sept.* 4, 1875.—. . . I have now read ⅔rds of the Renaissance volume with unflagging interest. I do not know that it tells me anything wh. I did not absolutely know before; but then, early in life, I was rather deep in Italian Literature, and the Hughenden Library is rich in Renaissance. But the writer is a complete Italian scholar, and has a grasp of his

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subject, wh., from the rich variety of its elements, can never be one of simplicity, and yet wh., from his complete hold, he keeps perspicuous.

As he warms with his theme, he even evinces some spark of that divine gift of imagination, in wh. he appeared to me at first deficient. . . .

What he fails in is style; not that he lacks vigor but taste. He writes like a newspaper man, 'our own correspondent,' but wants the stillness and refinement and delicacy and music, wh. do not fall to the lot of the active journalist.

He talks, for example, of two great statesmen 'playing a game of diplomatic *Écarté!*' Independent of the familiarity and triteness of such an image, there is something offensive in a grave historian illustrating his narrative by referring to a transient game. He might as well have illustrated his battles by croquet, or that lawn-tennis in wh. you excel. He is perpetually speaking of certain opinions and feelings as being very *bourgeois*—and so on.

In letters, the first, and greatest, condition of success is—style. It is that by wh. the great authors live. It is a charm for all generations, and keeps works alive, wh. would be superseded from the superior information obtained since they were first composed, by the magic of the language in wh. the original statements and conclusions are conveyed.

Works of imagination, whether in prose or verse, have this advantage over other literary compositions—they cannot become obsolete from their matter being superseded; but then they cannot live unless they fulfil the great condition of style in the highest degree. This makes Shakespeare and Goethe and Byron and Dante immortal—and not less so, the authors of *Don Quixote* and *Gil Blas*. We have no English novel like them, for style is not the forte of Walter Scott.

It is style wh. is the secret and spell of the classic authors. Both Greek and Roman had a power of expression, wh. was then their characteristic. . . .

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CHAPTER XVI.

THE LAST YEAR.

1880–1881.

Beaconsfield survived his downfall exactly one year; and during all the time, in spite of age and illness, he refused either to seek the ease of retirement, or to give himself wholly to those literary pursuits which he loved and with which he filled his leisure hours. He was moved by a sense of chivalry and duty to the country, to the Queen, and to his party. He would do his utmost to ward off from the country those evils which he feared the new régime would bring upon her; to help and comfort the Queen, compelled to accept a Minister of whose conduct she disapproved and whose policy she distrusted; and to reinvigorate and reorganise his own creation, the modern Tory party. His conception of his duty to the party which he had led first to victory and then to defeat was quite different from his rival's; and his cheerful shouldering, at the age of seventy-five, of the thankless political burden laid upon him in 1880 contrasts very favourably with Gladstone's evasion, at the age of sixty-four, of similar difficulties in 1874. It was at a party meeting of Tory Lords and Commons in Bridgwater House on May 19 that Beaconsfield formally intimated that his services were still at the disposal of his political friends; and Rowton gave the Queen an account of a function from which the Press had been excluded.

Lord Rowton to Queen Victoria.

71, SOUTH AUDLEY STREET, *Wed., May* 19, 1880.—Lord Rowton, with his humble duty to your Majesty.

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The meeting at Bridgwater House this afternoon was a conspicuous success, in numbers full beyond expectation, in spirit excellent, while Lord Beaconsfield's observations met with deep attention and constant applause, which leave no doubt as to the unanimous feeling of the Conservative party.

Lord Beaconsfield, on entering the Picture Gallery, in which there were some 500 Peers and Members of Parliament, past and present, was received with enthusiastic cheering, and at once began to speak from a dais in the centre of the Gallery.

Enjoining strict confidence as to all that might be said there, he compared the position of the party with the far worse one which it occupied after the Election of 1832, pointing the moral to be drawn from Lord Grey's early fall, and citing other precedents and reasons for not taking an exaggerated view of the present defeat.

He ascribed it to two principal causes. First the state of general social distress, commercial and agricultural, which really arose from natural causes, and not, as was alleged by 'travelling agitators,' from neglect of beneficial legislation by your Majesty's late Government. This he proved very successfully by dwelling on their many good social measures in redress of real grievances.

The second cause he described as the 'new foreign political organisation' of the Liberal party—a system demanding most minute criticism and consideration, which duty had been undertaken by a small Committee of his late colleagues, with the Rt. Hon. W. H. Smith as Chairman.

As to the future his advice, mainly addressed to the House of Commons, was to watch especially the party of revolution, perhaps 100 in number; and to support the Government with all their force, when resisting, as they must at first, any violent proposals. Such a course would infallibly win for the party the respect and confidence of the country.

'The policy of the Conservative party is to maintain the *Empire* and preserve the *Constitution*.'

The Empire was especially in risk of being threatened in the regions of the Mediterranean, where it was of supreme importance that England should have such a stronghold as Cyprus could easily be made to afford—a remark which was received with strong assent. The Empire moreover depended much on the maintenance of the tie with the Colonies—a tie which he believed to be at this moment a growing one, in proof of which he cited amid great applause the offer of Canada, when war seemed probable lately, to furnish your Majesty with a contingent of 10,000 troops.

As to the Constitution, he would not criticise the probable domestic action of the party in power as to particular measures.

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But there could be no doubt that the first step towards any organic change must be a revolution in the tenure of land—in other words the pulling down of the aristocracy, which was the first object of the revolutionary party. All their propounded schemes should be examined with reference to that key-note.

Lord Beaconsfield ended by saying that, had the result of the elections been different, he might have felt himself justified, in view of many years' service, in seeking repose and asking them to follow the leaders of great ability who were to be found among his colleagues; but in the hour of failure he would not withdraw, but would still place at their service whatever advice his experience might enable him to afford.

This announcement was cheered again and again; and he sat down after speaking an hour and forty minutes.

Lord Carnarvon then rose and expressed his wish to act with the Conservative party in its moment of trouble, whatever may have been the course which, two years since, he felt himself reluctantly obliged to adopt, and gave his general warm approval to what Lord Beaconsfield had said.

The Duke of Buccleuch spoke in strong support of Lord Beaconsfield, and his advice to-day given.

Sir Robert Peel in a characteristic vigorous speech declared his complete adhesion to the Conservative party and Lord Beaconsfield: and the Duke of Richmond and Sir Stafford Northcote expressed the complete confidence of your Majesty's late Ministers in Lord Beaconsfield, and their gratification that he still proposed to lead the Conservative party.

This meeting was on the day before the opening of the new Parliament for business. Beaconsfield had retired to Hughenden on Saturday, May 1—in a state of coma, he told Lady Bradford; and there, in the country home of which he was so fond, he lived quietly for the remainder of the year, only coming up to London for a few nights when the stress of politics demanded his presence in the House of Lords, and paying occasional visits to his Sovereign. With the loss of Downing Street, he was entirely without a London house, as he had given up Whitehall Place when he moved into the official residence. In this difficulty, Alfred de Rothschild, Baron Lionel's second son, came tactfully to his rescue; and placed at his disposal 'a suite of independent rooms' in his

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beautiful house in Seamore Place, and, Beaconsfield told Lady Bradford, 'everything else that I want, and, as far as he is concerned, leaves me quite alone.' There could have been no greater kindness, and the old statesman was delighted with his quarters. 'I think it is the most charming house in London,' he told Lady Chesterfield; 'the magnificence of its decorations and furniture, equalled by their good taste.'

To Lady Bradford.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *May* 9.—Your letter was most agreeable—your letters always are. You said you had a great deal more to tell me. Pray tell it, and don't wait for responses from the eremite, who hears nothing, and is absorbed in his own thoughts.

Except the first two days when I lived in the air, the N.E. wind, which then arrived, as Gladstone did, after me, has brought back my asthma and kept me much a prisoner. . . .

May 14.—. . . It is hot here, but a fatal blast all the same, and I suffer much from my enemy. I have a terrible week before me. On Monday we[1] go to Windsor 'dine and sleep,' and on the following day I have a sort of council in Seamore Place. Then, on Wednesday, Bridgwater House: a fine occasion for an asthmatic Demosthenes.

The only consolation I have is to remember that William 3rd was a victim like myself; but then he had only to counsel and fight, and not to talk. And I have heard my father say that his friend the great Kemble (John) used to enchant the world with his Coriolanus, and when he came behind the scenes, fell into the arms of men who carried him to a sofa, where he panted like a hippopotamus for an hour.

I tried to write yesterday, but cd. not spell, and feel now half idiotic.

[SEAMORE PLACE], *May* 19.—A fine meeting in a palace worthy of one. I was in hopes to have called on you afterwards, but the affair was late and longer than I had expected, and I was exhausted, tho' I hope I did not show it.

Now I am going to the dinner, with the Speech,[2] just received from the A.V.;[3] 'tis dull and mischievous, but won't set the Thames on fire. . . .

[1] Rowton went with Beaconsfield.

[2] *I.e.*, the Queen's Speech.

[3] 'A. V.,' short for 'Arch Villain,' is often used at this period in Beaconsfield's familiar letters to denote Gladstone.

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I believe they will not be content with[ou]t my head, as Strafford said.

To Anne Lady Chesterfield.

[SEAMORE PLACE], *May* 24.—. . . On Friday I shd. have returned to Hughenden, but H.R.H. Prince Hal kept me in town for a Sunday luncheon. This has inconvenienced me, as I want to get back to my woods, and watch the burst of spring.

The Ministry seems in all sorts of difficulties, but I don't think scrapes signify to a Government in their first year.

Lord Hartington dined here last night, and was friendly and agreeable, with[ou]t any affectation. He told me he thought the Govt. wd. be beaten about Bradlaugh.

To Lady Bradford.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *May* 27.—. . . My week, beginning with Windsor and ending with Seamore Place, was too much for me, and I have been very unwell ever since. In spite of westerly winds, my asthma has returned.

I am here quite alone,wh. for an invalid is the best medicine.

While enjoying the summer at Hughenden, and working daily at his desk to finish *Endymion*, Beaconsfield kept a keen watch on the developments of Ministerial policy. Gladstone was checked at the outset by a miserable squabble about the propriety of allowing Bradlaugh, the militant atheist, to take the oath or affirm his allegiance in the House of Commons; and before long he found himself involved in those serious difficulties in Ireland, the imminence of which, in spite of Beaconsfield's warnings, he had obstinately refused to contemplate. He allowed the Peace Preservation Act to lapse which the Beaconsfield Government would have renewed; and, in the face of a growing anti-rent agitation, proposed to secure social order by suspending for eighteen months the right of eviction for non-payment of rent. This was the one right of the landlord left untouched by the Irish Land Act of 1870; and Disraeli had then predicted that, as a result of the Act, Irish agitators would fix upon the payment of rent as a new grievance, to be abated by the

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old methods of lawless violence. But he had never contemplated that a British Government would admit the agitators' claim; and he took a leading part in advising the Lords to throw out a Bill, for which a majority was obtained in the Commons only by the Parnellite and Home Rule vote.

To Anne Lady Chesterfield.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *June* 2.—. . . Last Thursday Newport and his brother Francis came down here for a day's fishing in my water, and did well. Newport bagged nine trout, and one twopounder. I sent him up to town with all of them, and they were to be divided bet[wee]n S. and Ida.

These two ladies came down and lunched here yesterday; but the day was not one of brilliant sunshine as awaited Newport, for the rain came at last. Hitherto, it has rained in every parish except this.

I go up to town to-morrow for the 2nd reading of the Burials Bill in the Lords. I think it an odious Bill, and cannot see, on the grounds the concession is to be made, why the Dissenters shd. not have their share of the churches as well as their yards. I shall oppose it, but with little hope, since I understand the two Archbishops, and half the bench, vote for it! This feebleness and false conciliation gain neither regard nor respect. . . .

To Lady Bradford.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *June* 8.—. . . When I am in solitude, and mine is complete, for I have not interchanged a word with a human being since we parted, I get absorbed in studies and pursuits, wh. render letter-writing almost impossible to me—quite impossible except to you. . . .

My Lady of the Isle presented me yesterday with four fine cygnets.

There are ½ a doz. peacocks now basking at full length on the lawn, motionless. I prefer them in these attitudes to their nourishing unfurled their fanlike tails. They are silent as well as motionless, and that's something. In the morning, they strut about, and scream, and make love or war.

All my hopes are on Chippendale.[1]

June 11.—Your letter was delightful—what they call graphic. I am glad I have been to Ascot, and have royally lunched, and lounged on lawn; as I see it all in your bright page to the very life.

[1] Lord Bradford's racehorse. See above, p. 500.

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THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD

WITH THE INSCRIPTION ON THE BACK

'IN MEMORY OF THE DEAR EARL OF BEACONSFIELD,'
'BORN DECEMBER 21, 1804; DIED APRIL 19, 1881.'

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All my household were on Bradford's stable, and I believe well backed their opinion. The coachman on these matters is the great authority, greater even than Baum. He has backed the stable systematically for some time. At first, to use his lingo, because he thought it 'respectable to Ld. B.,' as a friend of his Lord's; but for the last year from a conviction that Ld. B.'s stable had at length got right. I fear, however, he has been hit on the Cup. We cd. have beaten anything but Isonomy. . . . .

June 14.—. . . I shall be in the Ho. of Lords to-morrow evening D.V., but shall depart by an early train the next day. I cannot resist the fascination of the sultry note of the cuckoo, the cooing of the woodpigeons, and the blaze of the rosy may. . . .

About the Budget, I don't think it a Conservative budg. It is another attempt to divert and separate the farmers from the gentlemen, and will be successful. I think the Game Bill, with this view, much the most devilish of the A. V.'s schemes. In time the farmers will find out that Rep[eal] of M[alt] T[ax] will do them no good, but they will stick to the hares and rabbits, and there will be a chronic cause of warfare.

To Anne Lady Chesterfield.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *June* 27.—. . . If the Eviction Act passes, there will not be many more seasons. It is a revolutionary age, and the chances are that even you and I may live to see the final extinction of the great London season, wh. was the wonder and admiration of our youth. . . .

July 7.—. . . I have had the honor of receiving this importunate guest[1] in most of my limbs. It began with my right hand, and there it lingers; all rest well. My only compensation, and it is a great one, is that it appears to have driven away my asthma, of which I have long been the victim this year. . . .

To Lady Bradford.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *July* 4.—. . . I have no faith whatever in the Whig defection on the Land Bill—the most dangerous thing that has happened in my time—now a long experience. The Fenian members will, by their numbers, compensate the A. V. for the Whig defection. The Whigs may be indignant, but they are pusillanimous. There is no one in the Cabinet equal to the emergency, or qualified for it. Spencer is weaker than water; Granville has not an acre; Kimberley not much; Argyll will only kick for Scotland;

[1] The gout.

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Westm[inste]r a creature of the A. V., and, I fear, we know the length of Hart[ingto]n's foot. Alas! Alas!

July 7.—. . . I really think the country is going to the devil, but I have resolved to oppose the Land Bill, in the House of Lords, on its principle, and we must be fools and cowards if we do not win. So Bradford, and no one, must go away. I am trying not to make it a mere party move, but an effort to keep property still sacred. The D. of Somerset will oppose the Bill, and, if he wd. move its rejection, I think we should be safe. . . .

I shall appeal personally to every peer who owes his creation to the late Ministry.

Northcote came down to consult his chief about the obnoxious Bill; and his diary gives a pleasing picture of the old statesman's life in the country.

From Sir Stafford Northcote's Diary.[1]

July 11, 1880.—I went down to Hughenden in the afternoon. Lord Beaconsfield sent his carriage to meet me at Maidenhead, and I had a most charming drive of 12 miles. . . . Found the chief very well and delighted to see me. He has been quite alone with his peacocks, and revelling in the country, which he says he has never seen in May or June before. I gave him an account of the Parliamentary situation. His general view was, that we ought, above all, to avoid putting our Whig friends into any difficulty by making them appear to be playing a Tory game. We must keep as clear as possible of any Home Rule alliance and we had better not move amendments on the [Compensation for Disturbance] Bill. . . . We ought to make a strong effort to defeat the Bill on the Third Reading. The Lords, he said, were determined to throw it out, whatever might be its shape when it came up to them, and he hoped they would do so by a very large majority, a hundred or so. This would show that they saw it in its true light, as not merely an Irish measure but as the opening of a great attack on the land, and that they were determined to stand upon their defence. The effects of the proceedings upon next year would be salutary.

He spoke strongly of Gladstone's vindictiveness, an element never to be left out of sight in calculating the course of events. It was a great fault in the Leader of a party, who ought to be above personal feelings. He said the Queen had told him, even before the Bradlaugh affair and these further troubles, that Gladstone found the House unmanageable. We talked

[1] Part of this extract was printed in Lang's *Northcote*, ch. 16.

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over the party arrangements and could arrive at no better conclusion than I had already reached. . . .

After dinner, we chiefly talked books; the Chief is always at his best in his library, and seemed thoroughly to enjoy a good ramble over literature. He was contemptuous over Browning (of whom, however, he had read very little) and the other poetasters of the day, none of whom he thought would live except Tennyson, who he said was a poet though not of a high order. He was much interested in my story of Sir Robert Peel's consulting Monckton Milnes on the relative merits of Tennyson and Sheridan Knowles when he had a pension to dispose of. He talked of Lord Derby's translation of Homer and said he had given his opinion against rendering him in blank verse. It was Ballad poetry. Pope's style was better suited to it, but was not the right thing. Walter Scott would have done it better than anyone. I told him of Tennyson's telling me that Burns originally wrote 'Ye banks and braes' with two syllables less in the 2nd and 4th lines and that he had spoilt it to fit a particular tune. This was like, or rather the reverse of, Scott's treatment of the heroic couplet. The chief was warm against the Homeric unity, and considered that everything Gladstone had written on Homer was wrong. He agreed with my theory that no poet could be well translated except by a superior (or at least an equal) poet. I said Coleridge's *Wallenstein* was the most satisfactory translation I knew, but then Coleridge was quite equal to Schiller. 'Yes,' he said, 'and better.' He instanced Moore's *Anacreon* as a success, and considered the translation there quite equal to his original. He was very laudatory of Theocritus, and quoted his line on Galatea coquetting for the kiss[1] as the most musical he knew in any language. He used to be fond of Sophocles, and to carry him about, but did not much care for Æschylus. Euripides had a good deal of fun in him. Lucian was a great favorite, and he gave me the *True History* to read in bed. He was very fond of Quinctilian, and said it was strange that in the decadence of Roman Literature, as it was called, we had three such authors as Tacitus, Juvenal, and Quinctilian. Horace, of course, he delighted in, and Virgil grew on one; he was a great admirer of Scaliger and of Bentley; Porson he did not think much of. He agreed with me in being unable to see the point of 'Now Hermann's a German.' He mentioned Bentley's correction of 'rectis oculus' as a good piece of criticism. Ben Jonson he did not care for. I did battle for him, and he promised to read him again. He gave me a good deal of information about editions,

[1] καὶ φεύγει φιλέοντα καὶ οὐ φιλέοντα διώκει.

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and as to which were rising in price. Giffard's *Ben Jonson* was one which was going up wonderfully. We lamented the disuse of classical quotations in the House of Commons. He said he had at one time tried to revert to them but the Speaker (Denison) had asked him not. 'Why? Do you think they don't like it?' 'Oh no! the House rather likes it; but you are making John Russell restless, and I am afraid of his taking to it too. He gave us six or seven lines of Virgil the other night, which had not the smallest connection with his speech or with the subject.'

July 12.—Stayed at Hughenden till 12, and had a pleasant walk in the garden with the chief. He said reflection only made him feel more sure that we ought to handle the Whigs carefully, making them seem to take the initiative, and supporting them; rather than taking it ourselves, and putting them in the distasteful position of having to desert their own party and join the Tories. The Whigs ought to come out and assert their *raison d'être* as upholders of the landed interest. The history of 1834 was repeating itself, and we ought to avoid the mess made of the 'Derby Dilly' secession, when Stanley and Graham joined the Conservatives too late. He said of the present crisis: 'A Government with a large majority may do almost anything with impunity in its first session. The errors of the present Government may be condoned and forgotten, but Lansdowne's resignation remains. That is the great fact we have to look to, and it will produce a great and lasting effect. People generally don't know that he is a young man. Many will think it is his grandfather. Anyhow, it is a great name, and as a fact, he is a devilish clever fellow who ought to be in the Cabinet.' He reverted again to Gladstone's vindictiveness and said Cardinal Manning had once told him that he knew Gladstone well, and that he thought him the most revengeful man he ever knew.

He talked over the state of the House and asked me many questions, as to the progress of Harcourt, Chamberlain, Dilke, James, Herschell, etc., and also as to our own bench. He lamented the uncertainty of Sandon's remaining in our House, and Smith's inferiority in speaking, which was much to be lamented as he was so valuable in many respects. . . .

To Lady Bradford.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *July* 18.—. . . Here we are absolutely ruined. The series of never-ending storms has destroyed all our hopes. A plentiful hay harvest drowned, and the finest crops we have had for ten years laid. It is a scene of ravage; of havoc like a conquered country. No amount of caloric,

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of which there seems little prospect, could now rally things. It is quite heartrending, and, coming from church to-day, my best tenants told me that they could struggle against it no longer. Wheat in Wycombe market on Friday, from New Zealand, and very fine, sold at 42s. pr. quarter—sold by samples, and guaranteed to be delivered in August.

This will be 'nuts' to Gladstone, who will never rest till he has destroyed the landed interest. If he were younger, the Crown would be in peril.

1, SEAMORE PLACE, *July* 30.—The terrible news from Afghanistan,[1] the defeat of Chippendale, and some other matters so knocked me up yesterday that I felt physically incapacitated to write. . . . I believe myself that this military disaster wd. never have occurred, had it not been for the rash announcement of Ripon, that England was only too anxious to quit Af[ghanista]n. Immediately every chief tried to make his fortune so that he might be the future Sovereign. . . .

Ld. Cairns arrived on Wedy., and called on me at once. He looks well and full of fight. Saly. also much improved. . . .

I am suffering from 'mine old familiar foe'—asthma; not very agreeable with a great debate before me.

Aug. 4.—A hurried line before I leave for Hughenden . . .

Last night, after a great debate of two days, an overwhelming majority showed that there was yet something to rally round in this country, tho' we have trying times before us.

The speech of Ld. Cairns was overwhelming, and one of the most extraordinary performances of sustained power in rhetoric that I ever listened to. Tho' nearly 3 hours, it was not too long, as it was our complete case for the country —not a point omitted.

The gem of the debate was Ld. Lansdowne's speech the first night, wh. only proved how very deficient Gladstone is in his perception of character and knowledge of human nature—in not placing Lans[down]e in the Cab. and offering him a subordinate office wh. he nearly declined. However, he has now taken his position as the ablest man of the Whig party—the most important, I shd. perhaps say, because, besides ability, one must look to his other great qualities, his rank, above all his name, and even superior to that—his youth.

I did not speak at all to my own satisfaction, wh. I rarely do; but, considering I had a bad asthma and it was two o'ck. in the morn, I must be content. . . .

[1] The defeat of General [Burrows at Maiwand.

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Beaconsfield was successful in his political strategy; the Whigs took the lead in resisting the Bill in the Lords. Lord Lansdowne left the Government rather than support it; the rejection was moved by Lord Grey, the son of the Whig Premier of 1832; and in the majority of 282 who condemned the Bill there were more professing Liberals than the 51 who were all that could be collected to vote in its favour. Beaconsfield's speech was considered rather tame; but, apart from the asthma, he chivalrously abandoned a direct attack on Gladstone, because the Prime Minister was then lying seriously ill in Downing Street. The objections which Beaconsfield formulated to the Bill were three: that it imposed the burden of what was a national misfortune upon a specific class, that it introduced insecurity into all kinds of transactions, and that it delegated to a public officer the extraordinary power of fixing the rents of the country. He could not understand, he said, that the best way of relieving the agricultural distress in Ireland was by plundering the landlords. He regarded the Bill as 'a reconnaissance in force' to test the feeling of Parliament and the people on the constitutional position of the landed interest; and he concluded with a passage, which legislators in a democratic country might well bear constantly in mind, about the difference between public opinion to which the Legislature should defer, and public sentiment or passion, which it was often desirable they should resist.

Beaconsfield held that the Compensation for Disturbance Bill was a matter of principle on which the Lords should take a firm stand. But he was anxious that they should avoid collisions with the Commons on minor matters, and in particular that they should not reject a Bill which the Government had introduced to allow tenants to protect their crops from injury by killing hares and rabbits. Here the interests of landlords and farmers were opposed, and Beaconsfield insisted that the House of landlords should show due consideration to the farmers. His efforts had to be the more energetic, as many Tory leaders in both

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Houses treated the prolongation of the session through August as an excuse for deserting Parliament. By example, as well as by precept, their chief, in his seventy-sixth year, did his best to rally them to the call of duty.

To the Duke of Richmond and Gordon.

Private. HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Aug.* 18, 1880.—I am in frequent communication with our friends in the Ho. of Lords, and shall be in my place to oppose the Hares and Rabbits Bill.

I think it would be unwise to oppose the 2nd reading in our House, for, I believe, we should not succeed in our attempt. But it does not do to announce that we are going to assent to the second reading, and that prevents my sending out at present, a whip for attendance on the Committee on the Bill. . . .

Private and Confidential. 1 *o'c.*, *Aug.* 20.—. . . There is a general *émeute* against the absolute desertion of the Front bench, when the Government is pushing most important Bills. When men like the Duke of Buccleuch seriously remonstrate with me about the absence of myself and colleagues—'Nobody to guide us, nobody to confer with. As for myself (Duke of B.) I at least, shall remain here to the last' etc., etc.—it is time to look to our p's and q's, if the party is really to be kept together.

The complaints of the absence of Lord Cairns are very marked. They say he has had long holidays, and much leisure this year, and while many of the peers are great employers of labor, in mines especially, they have not their Lord Chancellor to advise them—not a lawyer on our side. I go up on Monday and shall stay till the end. . . .

When I wrote to you last, I was not aware of the situation being so critical as regards the party, but that night Sir Stafford Northcote came down to me in a state of great perplexity and peril—and earnest remonstrances about the desertion of the Lords in a most difficult and critical session.

He is obliged to call the party together, to-day I believe, and looks forward to very troublous scenes. . . .

To Lady Bradford.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Aug.* 20.—I go up to London on Monday to take the command of the troops. It was necessary, as the greatest dissatisfaction was expressed, by our friends in both Houses, at our front bench, in the House of Lords,

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being deserted, and that in the Ho. of C. feebly attended. Stanley and John Manners seemed to have run away. Discontent very general. . . .

There is some reason in my being absent, for I have no roof of my own in town, but that is not the case of Cairns, D. of R. and G., and Ld. Cranbrook, who sneaked off with[ou]t saying a word. I have summoned them back, and they swear, at least the first two, most horribly, but they must eat the leek. Cranbrook behaves better, and will be up on Monday. I have ordered a stout whip to be sent everywhere.

I don't see why you think it will not last. So long as Hartington remains, and he gets deeper in with them every day, the Whigs will never move with effect; in fact, they can't; they are not strong enough.

CARLTON CLUB, *Aug.* 25, 6 *o'ck.*—I did not come up till Tuesday, the H. of L. having unexpectedly adjourned till that day. Yesterday, and to-day, pressing business. I had a meeting yesterday, and afterwards H. of L., and to-day another meeting of bewildered peers. It will be difficult to steer thro' all their difficulties.

To-day I had my late colls., Duke of Buccleuch, Bradford, Aveland, Carnarvon! The latter will surprise you. It was at his own request. I have the meetings in the golden rooms,[1] wh. are now in my sole possession.

I went this morning to the H. of Comm. and saw Mr. Chamberlain, who looked, and spoke, like a cheesemonger, and the other new lights: Mundella, who looked like an old goat on Mount Hæmus, and other dreadful beings. . . .

I am very tired, having walked too much, and too far, with Arthur Balfour for my equerry, who piloted me to the H. of C. . . .

This was Beaconsfield's much-talked-of visit to the House of Commons 'to see the Fourth Party.' That band of Tory free lances, consisting of Randolph Churchill, Drummond Wolff, and Gorst, with Mr. Arthur Balfour as a semi-attached member, had made their mark from the very first days of the Parliament by their untiring and effective militancy, regardless of the convenience alike of Ministers and of their own leader. They were all well known to Beaconsfield, and Churchill, their moving spirit, was a son of two old friends, and had attracted his

[1] At Seamore Place.

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favourable notice by his maiden speech. The puckish audacity and defiant independence of the party reminded him of his own youthful career; and he encouraged them to persevere, provided they did not carry their natural restiveness under the quiet methods of Northcote's leading into sheer rebellion. 'I fully appreciate your feelings and those of your friends,' he told Drummond Wolff; 'but you must stick to Northcote. He represents the respectability of the party. I wholly sympathise with you all, because I was never respectable myself. . . . Don't on any account break with Northcote, but defer to him as often as you can.' Gorst represents Beaconsfield as palliating disobedience, provided it came short of rupture. 'We should always courteously inform Northcote, through the Whip, of any step we are about to take in the House of Commons, and listen with respect and attention to anything he may say about it; his remarks, even when we disagree with him, will be well worth attention. But just at present we need not be too scrupulous about obeying our leader. An open rupture between us would, however, be most disastrous.'[1] It is possible that Gorst exaggerated the encouragement which he received. Beaconsfield wrote to Northcote from Hughenden on December 1 after this talk: 'I have had Gorst down here, and have confidence in his future conduct. I will assist you, as much as I possibly can, in looking after the Fourth Party.'

To Lady Bradford.

1. Seamore Place, *Aug.* 28.—. . . We are here in the thick of the Parly. campaign, and no one knows what may be its course or consequences. On Monday we have the 2nd reading of the Game Bill, and I have no idea of what the Lords will do; they seem very much inclined to cut their own throats. Unfortunately, many find a respectable leader in Lord Redesdale,[2] who has many excellent qualities and talents, but who is narrow-minded, prejudiced, and utterly unconscious of what is going on in the country, its wishes, opinions, or feelings.

[1] Winston Churchill's *Lord Randolph Churchill*, Vol. I., pp. 184-187.
[2] Chairman of Committees in the House of Lords, 1851-1886.

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I dined last night with Granville *en petitissième comité*. Hartington was there, and Spencer, and D. of Richmond, Hardwicke, and Bradford. Miladi made the 8th at a table wh. wd. rather have suited the Graces than the Muses. There ought to have been good conversation with such guests: but it was not so. Their talk was all shop, and I was greatly bored.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 3.—I came down here on Wedy. afternoon and am prostrate with asthma—the consequence of a week of spouting. Not that the public jabber was so much the cause, for that, tho' frequent, was brief, but the constant and lengthened homilies of private discussion did the mischief, and strained my feeble instrument beyond its power. . .

Beaconsfield might have exhausted himself by his exertions and brought on asthma; but he had succeeded in preventing the peers from perpetrating the folly of throwing out the Game Bill, and thus losing, as he told Lady Chesterfield, 'the only classes on wh. we once thought we cd. rely—the landed interest in all its divisions.' The argument which he found effectual in the House was that it would be a mistake for the Lords to take up a feeble position on the eve of a great constitutional struggle.

Beaconsfield's correspondence gives us a clue to his thoughts and feelings during the autumn; an autumn in which he had a peculiarly acute and prolonged attack of asthma and gout.

To Lady Bradford.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Sept.* 6.—. . . Here I am in perfect solitude: I hate driving, and I can't walk, until I get rid of my asthmatic demon.

Roberts is a first-rate man, as I always believed. I understand it was quite on the cards that he was not dismissed by the new Administration. They instantly put Stewart over him, and contemplated, I am told, his supersession in due course. . . .

The march[1] was the march of Xenophon, and the victory that of Alexander.

Sept. 10.—. . . I don't give my mind to politics, but it

[1] From Cabul to Candahar

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seems to me that the A. V. has carried everything before him, and has completely detached from us our old allies, the farmers. The clergy he had corrupted before.

We have been so unlucky that I think we ought to take the hint that Providence has given us. A ruler of England, who has to encounter six bad harvests, ought to retire from public life; if only on the plea of being *infelix*—the worst of epithets.

Sept. 17.—. . . You ask me about reading and new books, and reproach me rather for not recommending some. I never read, and scarcely see, a new book. All these new crotchetty reviews I am obliged to see—to catch not the Cynthia, but the nonsense of the minute, of which the Leader of a party must be master; and when they are exhausted, I take refuge in my classics, and try to restore the tone of the mind.

To Anne Lady Chesterfield.

Hughenden Manor, *Sept.* 17.—. . . My farmers have in-gathered an exuberant harvest, for wh. they say they cannot get a paying price. The rain suits them, as they abound in turnips and other roots.

Sept. 26.—. . . I have not been generally a pessimist, but am by nature somewhat too sanguine. I confess, however, that I feel evil times are falling on this land. I heard, yesterday, from a high quarter, that to-morrow the Great Powers, with the exception of France who withdraws from the Concert, will bombard Dulcigno! A sheer act of madness, and more calculated eventually to bring about a general war, than any piece of mischief that could be devised.

Oct. 10.—I am hardly capable of writing a line, for, last Monday, having the day before been quite well, I was fiercely and suddenly attacked by my old enemy, the asthma, and am really prostrate with, yesterday, incipient gout, which, tho' it adds to my sufferings, may eventually prove my friend.

It is very unfortunate that this shd. happen on the only time this year I have asked a few friends to Hughenden. . . .

I have seen, therefore, little of Selina during this visit,[1] tho' I hope she has been amused, as there were several agreeable men, Lytton, Sandon, and others, and yesterday arrived the great Monty, the favorite of Courts and Queens, and whom Her Majesty invited to dinner the same day as she did Hartington!

[1] Lord and Lady Bradford came to Hughenden on Friday, Oct. 8.

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To Lady Bradford.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Oct.* 22.—A few feeble words—my first—to tell you I have left my room this morning, and am shaven and shorn, and dressed and sofaed and in my writing-room after a terrible ten days or more. My right leg is yet bound up, and I dare not have recourse to any tonics while the enemy still lingers, or it would probably flare up again like the asthmatic powders, when all seems extinguished.

Oct. 26.—. . . I think I never knew the country in a worse state. There is only one thing worse, and that is the Tory party.

Oct. 29.—. . . I can't walk—even on the terrace, and it is too cold to sit out. But I am quite relieved from that awful asthma. . . .

Monty was to have gone this afternoon to Claremont and from thence to Sandringham for a week, and so on; but I hear his sister is ill, and he will have to take her probably to Biarritz at once. He is a devoted brother, and I believe he wd. even sacrifice Prince Hal for her, but sisters shd. marry and not require such sacrifices.

Lord Mayor's Day, '80.—. . . This is now the 5th week of my imprisonment, for tho' I am carried downstairs to sit in the sun, that is all I can manage, for I cannot use my legs. But the freedom from asthma is so vast a relief that I scarcely grudge the sort of coma into which my life has fallen. I have never had a fit of gout like it. It has attacked me with renovating ferocity. It reminds me of poor Ld. Derby. My hands are now pretty free, but the gout is in my face, etc. . . .

This voyage, and I fear prolonged visit, of Monty to Biarritz is most unfortunate, otherwise he wd. now have been here. . . .

1, SEAMORE PLACE, *Nov.* 15.—I am here rather unexpectedly, but many things combined to call me, among them to see my M.D. If he continued his visits to H[ughende]n, I shd. have to execute a mortgage on my estate, if indeed land be any longer a security. . . .

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Nov.* 21.—. . . Yesterday I learnt that Tankerville had accepted my offer;[1] so I am settled, in that respect, for the rest of my life: it being a nine years' lease. I don't think I cd. have done better, particularly as Monty, who undertook to do all this, was away. . . .

Nov. 26.—. . . I liked the *Cors*[*ican*] *Brothers*[2] as a melo drama, and never saw anything put cleverer on the stage. Irving, whom I saw for the first time, is third-rate, and never

[1] For his house in Curzon Street.
[2] Which he saw when last in London.

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will improve, but good eno' for the part he played, tho' he continually reminded me of Lord Dudley. . . .

Endymion is only published to-day. . . .

Nov. 28.—. . . Why you call this 'a tottering Govt.' I am entirely at a loss to comprehend. It appears to me one of the strongest Ministries we have had, and unhappily, and I speak, I am sure, with[ou]t prejudice, its strength will be, and must be, exercised against all those institutions, laws, manners, customs, wh. we have hitherto revered and tried to cherish.

The Queen has been horribly deceived; she was told, as I believe, that the present arrangement was the only one that wd. preserve her from the Radicals, guarded, as she wd. be, by a firm Whig element in the Cabinet. The Whig element dare not say Bo to a goose—much less to Gladstone, who certainly [is] not a goose. He is now really the head of the Radicals, and sets the Whigs at defiance, who will swallow anything, if only to conceal their insignificance, which resignation would demonstrate.

As for the Crown, it is not much better off than the Whigs. . .

To Anne Lady Chesterfield.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Dec.* 2.—. . . This Epiphany session very inconvenient, and, I think, a little blasphemous. I can't get into my house by the 6th Jany., and shall have to lie in the streets. . . .

Dec. 7.—I am going to Windsor to-morrow, and shall return here on Friday afternoon. . . .

The weather here is delicious. As yet, December has beaten even our soft and sunny November. What fools they are to go to Cannes, and Nice, and Algiers! when they might stay at home with every comfort, and with as bland an atmosphere! . . .

Private. Dec. 22.—I am not a pessimist: rather the reverse: but, I confess, the present state of affairs makes me tremble. Old England seems to be tumbling to pieces. I believe that, if Constantinople were occupied by a foreign Power to-morrow, we shd. not stir a foot. Could we? With Ireland in revolution, S. Africa in rebellion, and the Radicals and Jacobins in England so intent on the destruction of the landed interest, wh. is the backbone of the State, that no one will spare any energies to external dangers and vigilance. I never thought that, in my time, it wd. come to this.

I receive letters every day, asking me to write a manifesto, and make a speech; that I am the only man who cd. do so with effect; and all that.

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Why shd. I? I warned the country about Ireland before the General Election, and told them to be vigilant, or there wd. something happen there 'worse even than famine or pestilence.' It has happened. And there have been elections since the Irish Revolution in England, Wales, and Scotland, and they have supported the policy of imbecility and treason that has brought about all this disaster.

Beaconsfield's last Christmas was once more spent in solitude at Hughenden. His anxieties, public and private, were serious. His prophecies of the troubles which a change of Government would entail had proved to be only too true. Ireland was in revolution, the Transvaal in revolt, while England had lost the Continental sympathies and respect that he had secured for her. Parliament was to meet early in the New Year in order to cope with Irish disorder; but Rowton, instead of returning to watch over his chief, had been compelled to take his sick sister to winter in Algiers. 'Your absence is a calamity,' Beaconsfield wrote to him. Looking round for help he had recourse to another friend of some standing to take his secretary's place.

To Lady Bradford.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Dec.* 17.—. . . Affairs are most critical, and my labors intolerable—the mere letter-writing etc. too much even for youth. I have written to George Barrington to take Monty's place. He is not a Monty, but he has good talents, great experience of the pol. world, having been priv. secy. to Ld. Derby, and one too on whose honor and devotion I can rely.

The problem of providing for a successor in the leadership of the Lords, if not of the party, had occupied much of Beaconsfield's thoughts in the autumn. He had experienced considerable trouble in the management of the Lords over the Hares and Rabbits Bill, and his acute attack of the gout in the autumn and the steady deterioration of his health during the winter, warned him that his time might not be long. 'I hope my successor will soon appear,' he had written to Sandon on October 1. And

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in December, when writing to the Duke of Buccleuch, who, having been Peel's colleague in the forties, was the veteran of the Tory party, he said: 'I had hopes that our friends in the House of Lords would by this time have found a leader more competent in many respects than your correspondent. But I have been foiled in effecting this.' His choice was, of course, Salisbury, to whom, by letter to his retreat on the Riviera, he confided his sentiments on this and other political matters on the eve of the session.

To Lord Salisbury.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *Dec.* 27, 1880.—Your letter reached me on Saturday. On the 20th of this month I heard[1] that the Ministry is agreed, 'quite determined,' to bring in a Coercion Bill the first thing, and to proceed with it *de die in diem* until passed. So much for intelligence. Now for other matters.

One of my dreams was, that, in Feby., I should be sitting behind you in the Ho. of Lords, and that you would be leading H.M.'s Opposition. I thought the publication of *Endymion* would have much facilitated this. But this Epiphany session, and your letter of to-day, add to my embarrassments.

I have communicated my general wish, among other matters, to the Duke of Buccleuch, but I have not got his answer, which is long due. We are so driven for time, that, I suppose, I must appear in my place.

Now as to immediate business: Lytton will not lose a day in bringing forward the Afghan policy. Your presence in such a debate would be desirable, but is not absolutely necessary. I should think that Cranbrook and myself could sufficiently sustain the debate.

But what about Turkish questions? There is to be a blue book, and notwithstanding the absorbing interest of Ireland, the world will expect to be illumined on the Eastern situation, and will naturally look to the Ho. of Lords for it. What do you propose in this matter? You might study the papers at Nice, and come over specially for the debate? If there be one.

I pause, in the midst of this troublesome letter, to touch on the nemesis, that made Derby subscribe to Boycott,[2] and

[1] From the Queen. See above, p. 544.

[2] Captain Boycott was, in Ireland this winter, the most conspicuous victim of the system which in consequence was named 'boycotting.'

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Carnarvon denounce Bright, on the same day, or almost. And for this, they left their real friends!

I shall be in town permanently on 31st Decr. I wish to see many people, and to use myself to the human face divine. It is no easy thing to step out of the profound solitude in which I live—often not speaking to a human being the whole day—and walk into the House of Lords and make a speech on a falling Empire. I have telegraphed to Gibson, and Cairns, to see me as soon as possible—I have had correspondence with Donoughmore, whose sensible letter only explains that wh. it does not alter. It seems that this Orange movement is a continuation of some nonsense of that whipper-snapper——, wh. he promulgated to save his seat, and wh. seat he lost—as most of the others, who made the same disgraceful sacrifice of common sense and honesty.

Now I must tell you that nothing will induce me to support the 3 F's[1]—three fiddlesticks. During a long parliamentary life, and long before I was in Parliament, I have been profoundly convinced, that the greatness and character of this country depended on our landed tenure. All the rest, I look upon, and have ever looked upon, as 'leather and prunella.' I fear the pass is sold, but I shall make every effort to rally the troops and restore discipline. And then, if I fail, I must be content with the position of Cassandra, and prophesy what no one will credit.

I have formally, and even solemnly, warned the house in wh. I now sit, that the landed system of this country would be attacked and invaded by the revolutionary party, and if, after that, they relinquish their outposts without a struggle, I think it would be as impertinent in me as useless, to attempt to guide their decisions.

I have tried to convey to you the state of affairs—I can give you no counsel as to your movements. I think your absence deplorable, but your presence, at the sacrifice of your health, would be calamitous. You have got good councillors. I wish I had such. I hope they are well, and send to them 1,000 kind thoughts.

With the money which he received for *Endymion* Beaconsfield had taken a house in Curzon Street; but it was not ready for his occupation when the 'Epiphany' session of Parliament brought him to town. Once more, therefore, he availed himself of Alfred de Rothschild's hospitality, and went up to Seamore Place on the last

[1] Fixity of tenure, fair rents, and free sale—the principles which were embodied in the Irish Land Act of 1881.

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day of the year. For the few days that elapsed before Parliament met he was so indisposed that he scarcely left his room. But he was able to be in his place for the debate on the Address on January 7, and to denounce the Government on the general lines of his political letters of December. He pointed out that the old tradition, which introduced a certain magnanimity into public life, was that, when a change of Administration took place, there should be no more alteration in the general conduct of affairs than was absolutely necessary. But, when Gladstone's Ministry was formed, 'in every manner and on every occasion it was announced that a change of Government meant a change in every part and portion of the Government; that everything which had been concluded was to be repudiated; that everything consummated was to be reversed. . . . Perpetual and complete reversal of all that had occurred was the order that was given.' So a Conference had been convoked at Berlin to modify and supersede the decisions of the Congress of Berlin. The Congress had brought European peace; but the result of this new Conference was that the war in the East was on the point of being revived, 'and England was near being a belligerent, and a belligerent, too, against our old ally.' So in Afghanistan, which would form a subject of special debate later. In Ireland, too, Beaconsfield's solemn warning had been slighted, it was asserted that the country was crimeless and satisfied, and the Peace Preservation Act which the late Government was about to renew was dropped. Now Ministers had to change their course on a great scale, because nothing less would suffice. 'Your lordships know the condition of Ireland at the present time. Europe knows it, Asia knows it. It is no longer, unhappily, a merely "English question." The honour, perhaps the existence, of England depends upon our rallying our forces, not only with regard to Ireland, but with regard to other scenes of disquietude and danger which have been created by what has occurred in Ireland.' Nothing would be more

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justifiable than an amendment censuring the Government for not taking measures in time to meet the Irish crisis. But the occasion was too serious for party considerations, and therefore he would not move; but would support the measures to be proposed to restore, in Ireland, peace and order, and to re-establish there the Queen's sovereignty.

'I had much to say,' he told Lady Bradford next day, 'which I was physically unable to express—and I left the House. I had been suffering from my great enemy for a week, and, tho' relieved from it, the remedies had terribly weakened me.' But, in spite of this constant ill-health, and of the most severe winter for many years, Beaconsfield was indefatigable, whenever he could muster sufficient strength, in dining out; and in his letters, and in the diaries and letters of others, we have frequent mention of dinner-parties which he attended in the ten weeks before his fatal illness began. On many of these occasions he seems to have been in large measure his old self, and to have delighted those who met him by the sententious piquancy of his talk. But at other times he sat silent and deathlike, a mummy at the feast; and his fellow-guests carried away an impression of deafness and decrepitude. One thing was evident. Wherever he appeared, he was the centre of interest. He might have lost his political supremacy: he remained the most commanding figure in London society. After the first fortnight of January he got into his new house in Curzon Street, in a district which he loved as being above the fogs of Westminster and in close neighbourhood to the 'sylvan joyance' of that Arcadia, Hyde Park. Of the street itself he had written affectionately in *Tancred*[1] as having a semi-rural character; starting almost out of 'what is still really a lane,' Park Lane, skirting the gardens of Chesterfield House where the rooks could be heard cawing in the trees, and, 'after a long, straggling, sawney course, ceasing to be a thoroughfare, and losing

[1] Ch. I.

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itself in the gardens of Lansdowne House and Devonshire House.

To Lady Bradford.

1, SEAMORE PLACE, *Jan.* 10.—. . . My hostess [Lady Lonsdale] told me she had invited you. It was very well done; the house beautiful, full of everything fair and precious, but owing its mansion character entirely to the staircase, wh. I devised. Before that, it was two houses, and a failure. Louise dined there and Harty-T., and the Lathoms, Cadogan, Dorchesters, Claud Hamiltons, Monty, B. O. Lonsdale himself very calm and agreeable, and well informed. . . .

The preceding day my host had a little dinner, wh. was amusing, the Lyttons, Randolph Churchills, Harry Bourkes, Louise, and some men, B. O., Dupplin and Co.

I am very nervous to-day about Lytton's *début* in the Lords, on Candahar, etc. . . .

Jan. 12.—Lytton made a great success on Monday, and at once mounted into the first class of present Parliamentary speakers. He had been so traduced, and so depreciated by the Government and Co.; they had circulated so many ill-natured stories about his preparations and certain and ludicrous failure; that his triumph was proportionately increased. Now he is master, and can give on any occasion even his bitter opponent the D. of Argyll much more than he receives.

It is a white world here, and deep. I dine at Louise's to-day; also Monty, but feel very sleepy. Harty-Tarty, they say, made a very effective speech last night. Hitherto we have done well in the debate, but chiefly owing to two Irishmen, Gibson and Plunket; the former, they say, quite excellent. But I wish Northcote wd. bring forward a little more his young English members—Stanhope and G. Hamilton for example. . . .

19, CURZON STREET, *Jan.* 17.—I was very sorry that I could not write to you on Saturday, and announce my having again a London home, but the weather had so completely paralysed me that I cd. do absolutely nothing. . . .

Louise's was amusing. I asked Hartington 'how the miscreants were,' wh. seemed not to displease him. But it is really too cold for society. I had fires for nearly a month in every room in my house every day, and I have hot air besides. I was glad to get away from Alfred's. He is the best and kindest host in the world, but all the marriage festivities[1] are now taking place, and one must have been in the way. I

[1] Leopold de Rothschild's marriage on Jan. 19, 1881.

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dined there on Saturday at a great banquet, and sate by Lady Dudley, whom I always like; she is very intelligent. The garden was illumined by electric light: magical. They danced aft[erwar]ds, but I escaped at 11 o'ck.: Monty tells me the affair was late. On Wedy. there will be a real ball, wh. I shall not attend, as I shall be in my first sleep before the first guest arrives. Then, some other day, there is to be a great Sassoon ball. P. of W[ales] goes to Alfred's ball on Wednesday.

Politics are more confused than ever: no one sees light.

To Anne Lady Chesterfield.

19, CURZON STREET, *Jan.* 20.—I did not get out on Tuesday, being in a state of stupor, and only capable of lying on a sofa by the fire. I cannot write in these moods. I suppose there never was a severer day in this great city. I was not much better yesterday, and could not possibly go to the wedding, but I did manage to appear at the later ceremonial, tho' quite unfit for it. To-day my room is full of sunbeams, but I am told they do not portend a thaw. . . .

Jan. 26.—The weather has completely upset me, and I really cannot fight against it any more. As they say, it would kill a horse.

I was in hopes to have called on you to-day, but the moment I breathe the air, even in furs and a close carriage, the asthmatic seizure comes on. I was obliged to return, and shall, if possible, not go out again till the wind changes. . . .

During this month there was in progress, in the House of Commons, a vehement struggle by Parnell and his followers against the measures introduced by the Government—a Protection of Person and Property Bill and an Arms Bill—to restore order in Ireland. These Irish irreconcilables held up all the proceedings of the House by the most flagrant obstruction, culminating in a sitting of over forty-one hours, from the afternoon of Monday, January 31, to nine o'clock on the morning of Wednesday, February 2, when it was only terminated by resolute and unprecedented action on the part of the Speaker. Some form of closure of debate was felt to be inevitable; but the Conservatives, under Beaconsfield's guidance, insisted on confining its operation within narrow limits. To Rowton, who had returned for a few weeks from Algiers

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and was on a visit to Sandringham, Beaconsfield wrote about the difficulty of coming to any arrangement in these matters with Gladstone.

To Lord Rowton.

19, CURZON STREET, *Jan.* 29, '81.—I got your letter with pleasure, and merely send this line, that you may have the satisfaction of knowing, that my going down to the *Clôture* Meeting did much good, and saved the ship from the breakers.

Gladstone is trying it on, with every art of Jesuitry, on his former pupil, but all is so tied up—'strictly tied up' as B. Hope would say—that N[orthcote] can do nothing without consulting me. To-day, Ponsonby called from our ever gracious Mistress, with a view of ascertaining whether H.M. could 'do anything'; mediate between the parties, etc. The Cabinet is now sitting on the matter.

It was easy to settle affairs with Palmerston because he was a man of the world, and was, therefore, governed by the principle of honor: but when you have to deal with an earnest man, severely religious, and enthusiastic, every attempted arrangement ends in unintelligible correspondence and violated confidence.

To Lady Bradford.

19, CURZON STREET, *Feb.* 1.—The H. of C. is still sitting, having had a whole night of it, and, as yet, half of this day. I don't see the end of it. We are the laughing-stock of Europe.

I dined on Saturday at Granville's; a pleasant party. I sate next to Pss. Louise who never looked prettier; and on Sunday I dined with Lady Lonsdale, my lord away—very amusing. Louise and Harty-Tarty were there—the Cadogans, H. Chaplins, Sir Charles Dilke; all very good company and talked well: Harty-T. particularly, who is a clever fellow, and with some humor.

I am suffering, however, very much from asthma, wh. is detestable.

Monty has come back from Sandringham. . . .

[*Feb.*]—. . . We have had a feverish week here, and wonderful events in the House of Commons, recalling the days of Charles the 1st and the Commonwealth, the 5 members and Pride's Purge. Nobody, as yet, has got any credit except the Tory party, wh. carried with triumph yesterday its amendments to the Government scheme, amendments which were approved at my house, at a large meeting, called at a moment's notice, and attended by all the crotcheteers of the H. of C.

My house received them with ease, and cd. at any time

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accommodate 200. It is agreeable and convenient in every respect.

Feb. 9.—There is to be a great battle in the Lords on Candahar on the 24th inst.,[1] and I have some hope that the Government may be forced to 'repudiate' their rash and malicious decision on this subject.

I saw your sister to-day, driving in the Park, so she is better, but still suffering. The westerly wind and the sunbeams allowed me also to move and breathe, but my sufferings have been also great during the last month, tho' I have not wearied you about them. . . .

Feb. 12.—. . . Alas! Alas! Monty leaves me again, and for quite an indefinite time. Indeed I think the prospect is that he will remain at Algiers, or some similar place, for the whole of the spring and summer. His sister cannot get rid of her fever, and her physician writes that he had better join her as soon as possible.

In the midst of preparation for a great debate, having to see crowds of people, and to hold meetings, I lose the chief of my staff; my correspondence alone will overwhelm me. It is impossible to teach a new secretary his work. . . .

Rowton's return to Algiers meant that Beaconsfield, from now onwards till the closing stage of his illness, had to depend entirely upon Barrington, who was comparatively new to his chief's methods of work, but of whose devotion the association of December and January had made him well assured. While preparing for the Afghan debate, Beaconsfield continued to find relaxation in dining out. We have accounts of three dinners at the end of the third week in February, at Lady Airlie's on Friday the 18th, at Lady Stanhope's on the Saturday, and at Alfred de Rothschild's on the Sunday. After dinner at Lady Airlie's he had a talk with Matthew Arnold, by whose skill in coining unforgettable phrases he had long been attracted; and whom he complimented now as the only living Englishman who had become a classic in his lifetime.

The dinner at Alfred de Rothschild's was to meet the Prince of Wales. Among others present was Sir Charles Dilke, who thus met, for the second time within a month,[2]

[1] The debate was postponed till March 3 and 4. [2] See preceding page.

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the statesman whom he considered 'the most romantic character of our time.' On the first occasion Beaconsfield admitted that he had borrowed from Dilke's career traits for *Endymion*, and won the younger man's heart by saying that Dilke's grandfather and his own father, Isaac D'Israeli, were 'the last two men in England who had a thorough knowledge of English letters.' Dilke recorded that he 'thought him very polite and pretty in all his ways and in all he said.' On the second occasion he mentions that when Beaconsfield was offered a cigar he said: 'You English once had a great man who discovered tobacco, on which you English now live; and potatoes on which your Irish live; and you cut off his head!'—a very foreign and comical way of regarding Raleigh.[1]

With the beginning of March, Beaconsfield's activities in the House of Lords were resumed. On Tuesday, the 1st, he made a speech in support of the second reading of the Government Bill for the Protection of Person and Property in Ireland—a speech that was notable for the attention it called to the 'organised conspiracy of foreigners, living in a foreign country,' America, which sent emissaries to preach in Ireland 'the doctrine of assassination, of confiscation, and of the explosive patriotism of dynamite.' On the following Thursday and Friday, there came the Candahar debate, in which he made the last serious deliverance of his life on policy. Ministers had decided to give up Candahar, as had been Beaconsfield's own intention at the time of the Treaty of Gandamak. But he thought now that the situation had altered, and he strongly supported Lytton's motion that Candahar should be retained. The speech was made late on the second night of debate, in circumstances afterwards explained by Granville when, two months later, he was pronouncing a Parliamentary eulogium on his dead opponent.

I think it was at about twelve o'clock that Lord Beaconsfield sent me a message that he purposed speaking directly.

[1] *Life of Dilke*, Vol. I., pp. 410, 411.

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I sent him a strong remonstrance, saying that two peers who had been in office, and a third peer, one of the most remarkable speakers in the House, desired to take part in the debate. But Lord Beaconsfield persisted, and I thought I was justified in making a rather strong complaint of his having done so. I have since learned with regret that Lord Beaconsfield, just before he received the message, had swallowed one drug and had inhaled another drug, in quantities so nicely adapted as to enable him to speak free from the depression of his complaint, during the time that that speech required for delivery.

Though not up to the level of the best Disraeli orations, the speech had passages which deserve recall. The negotiations which the Government, who had previously been stiff, entered into with the Boers as soon as British troops had been beaten in the field prompted the gibe at Northbrook that 'one would suppose that the noble earl was not only a pupil in the peace-at-any-price school, but that he was also graduating for higher honours in the more refined school which would wage war and at the same time negotiate, more especially if our arms had been defeated.' And for once he turned sharply on his old friend, the deserter Derby, who had made a 'very animated' speech: 'I do not know that there is anything that would excite enthusiasm in him except when he contemplates the surrender of some national possession.' But the most memorable passage in his speech dealt with the 'keys of India.'

There are several places which are called the keys of India. There is Merv. . . . Then there is a place whose name I forget [presumably Herat]; there is Ghuznee, then there is Balkh; then Candahar. My opinion is that, although such places may not be essential to us, yet I should regret to see any great military Power in possession of them. I should look upon such an event with regret, and perhaps with some degree of apprehension; but if the great military power were there, I trust we might still be able to maintain our Empire. But, my lords, the key of India is not Herat or Candahar. The key of India is London. The majesty and sovereignty, the spirit and vigour of your Parliament, the inexhaustible resources, the ingenuity and determination of your people—

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these are the keys of India. But, my lords, a wise statesman would be chary in drawing upon what I may call the arterial sources of his power. He would use selection, and would seek to sustain his empire by recourse to local resources only, which would meet his purpose. You have always observed that system in this country for the last hundred years. You have skilfully appropriated many strong places in the world. You have erected a range of fortifications; you have overcome countries by the valour of your soldiers and the efforts of your engineers. Well, my lords, I hope that we shall pursue the same policy. If we pursue the same policy, Candahar is eminently one of those places which would contribute to the maintenance of that empire.

Redesdale in his Memoirs[1] relates a curious story about this classical phrase, 'The key of India is London.' Prince Lobanoff, Russian Ambassador in London in 1881, told Redesdale, three years later, at Contrexéville, that the day before the delivery of the speech he called in Curzon Street and had a long talk with Beaconsfield over the whole question; and that he himself had countered Beaconsfield's argument, that British troops could not evacuate Candahar as it was the key of India, by the reply: 'No, London is the key of India.' 'Le lendemain,' Lobanoff continued, 'il a reproduit mon mot dans son fameux discours.' Lobanoff's claim may, of course, have no better origin than in the besetting weakness of retailers of conversations to ascribe to themselves, regardless of accuracy, the best phrases struck out by the meeting of wits. But probably we have here a superlative instance of Beaconsfield's extraordinary power of appropriating phrases of others which had hitherto made no mark, and using them in so apt a fashion and on so wide a theatre that they can never in future be dissociated from his fame.

Beaconsfield had received since his resignation much hospitality from others; he determined, now that he had a London house, to entertain once more in his turn, little fitted though he was in health for such an exertion. His principal guests were to be the Granvilles, a becoming courtesy to the Leader in the Lords and his wife. In

[1] Ch. 35.

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order that they might not feel 'isolated' in a Tory house, he asked their colleagues, the Spencers, to meet them. Lady Bradford was not in town; but he had Bradford and Lady Chesterfield; the Duke[1] and Duchess of Sutherland, Lady Dudley,[2] Lady Lonsdale,[3] the Cadogans, the Barringtons; Leighton, the President of the Royal Academy; Alfred de Rothschild, recently his generous host, and Henry Manners, his old friend Lord John's eldest son, now Duke of Rutland. The Duke, indeed, Lady Granville and Lady Dudley are to-day the only survivors of a party—Beaconsfield's first and last in his new house—which contained several of the most distinguished and agreeable men and of the most beautiful and accomplished women in the London society of the day. The guests were asked for Thursday, March 10. On the Tuesday and Wednesday Beaconsfield was in bed with the gout—'very weak and shattered,' he told Rose. He had to put off 'Apelles,' as he playfully called Millais, to whom he was sitting for a portrait destined never to be finished;[4] and he feared he might have to put off the party also. But rest and care enabled him to play respectably his part as host.

To Lady Bradford.

19, CURZON STREET, *March* 11.—. . . The dinner yesterday went off, I believe, very well, but I was obliged to receive my guests with a stick, and while they enquired after my gout, required their sympathies for greater sufferings of which they knew nothing. As the gentlemen smoked after dinner, tho' not long, that gave me an opportunity of inhaling some of my poison in the form of a cigarette, and nobody found it out.

My gout is not worse, and I must hope the sun and the western breeze may mitigate my greater evil; but they have not yet.

Your arm will be agreeable to me in our morning walks, wh. I hope are at hand.

The day after the dinner-party he had to deal with a minor political crisis. He woke to find a letter from

[1] The 3rd Duke.
[2] Wife of the 1st Earl.
[3] Afterwards Marchioness of Ripon.
[4] See Frontispiece.

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Northcote, telling him that Gladstone wanted to apply to the ordinary business of Supply the new rule of Urgency, which had been framed to overcome the Parnellite obstruction to Peace Preservation Bills. The Tory leaders met at once in Curzon Street, and were inspired by Beaconsfield to resist this excessive demand. Here are his comments to the Queen.

To Queen Victoria.

19, CURZON STREET, *March* 12, 1881.

MADAM AND MOST BELOVED SOVEREIGN,—No Sovereign could decorate a subject with a new order, which could have conferred greater pleasure, than the box, which contained yesterday the harbingers of spring, and which now adorn my writing table. . . .

Here matters are most serious. Last night the Minister astounded the world with an announcement which, if carried into effect, would occasion the greatest revolution in the country since 1688.

He must have counted on the fears of the Tory party, and felt convinced that he could frighten them into submission. He has reckoned without his host. There is no one so indignant and determined as Sir Stafford Northcote, and, at a meeting this morning, all his followers pledged themselves to support him.

No one can foresee what your Majesty may be advised to do in 8 and 40 hours!

March 14.—. . . Your Majesty has doubtless seen the manifesto of Sir Stafford Northcote, addressed to the Electors of Devon, and in all the journals of this morning. I think it a masterpiece; his conduct, indeed, throughout this session, has shown equal skill and courage, and I have never found him falter in any advice which I have given him.

If the Minister persist in what has been styled an attempt at a revolution greater than anything since 1688, he will certainly be defeated. At the Cosmopolitan Club, last night, which both parties frequent, and where there is a philosophic latitude and license of political speculation, some of the Minister's intimates announced, that, if he were thwarted in this enterprise, he would take a 'decided step'; probably advise your Majesty to appeal to the country. This I doubt: but I should not be surprised, if your Majesty were favored with a mock resignation, as in 1873.

I foresee that the whole feeling of the country will be

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against him in this matter.—Ever, Madam, With all duty and affection, Your Majesty's devoted BEACONSFIELD.

'The House wouldn't stand it,' wrote Beaconsfield, narrating the upshot of the crisis to Rowton. 'Northcote greatly distinguished himself, and in spite of the tears of Walpole and the stern remonstrances of Sir John Mowbray, who is now treated by the Whigs as if he were a Bart. of James I., absolutely marshalled his forces, and inflicted an ignominious discomfiture on the great enemy.' To Northcote himself he said, in the last letter which he was to write to him, 'I most heartily congratulate you on your triumph. The Capitol never was ascended with more deserved glory!'

The sands of Beaconsfield's life were now running low, and he felt his powers of resistance to be failing him. On Tuesday, March 15, he made his last appearance in the House of Lords; and there supported, in moving terms, a Vote of Condolence to the Queen on the recent murder of the Tsar. He had long and often contended against Alexander, but he could now generously call him 'the most beneficent prince that ever filled the throne of Russia.' He described Europe as united in alarm and indignation at the crime; but said that no country was more horrified and sympathetic than Great Britain. The words, in their simplicity and sincerity, were worthy to be the farewell of a statesman to the Parliament which he had adorned.

His last letter to Lady Bradford was written on the following day.

To Lady Bradford.

Wednesday, [*March* 16].—A hurried line, for I hardly think this will reach you before your departure, just to say that I trust I shall see you to-morrow, if I call, as I hope, about six o'ck.

The P. of W. . . . has seen a great deal in his fortnight's absence: all the great men and, I suppose, some of the famous women—Bismarck, who in two hours did not give him the oppor[tunit]y of 'getting in a word,' and Gambetta, with whom he breakfasted, 'quite private,' alone, and who seems to have been as loquacious as his German rival. . .

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I am very unwell, and go about as little as I can, but, after an engagement of five weeks, have a great diplomatic banquet to-day, wh. will finish me. I thought when I was obliged to accept it the five weeks never wd. elapse.

Mrs. Goschen met him at the party mentioned in this last paragraph, and thought that, though brighter after dinner than before, and as courteous as ever to women, he had lost his old spirit and seemed very aged. 'I am blind and deaf,' he told her. 'I only live for climate and I never get it.'[1] In his failing health he felt Rowton's absence acutely. He wrote to him, on this same March 16: 'Barrington is very kind and sedulous, but I want you. My health has been very bad, and I have really been fit for nothing, but perhaps the spring, which commences in a week, may help me.'

The spring, to whose coming he looked for relief, delayed much longer than a week, and he never got the climate for which he sighed. On the heels of a winter of unusual severity there followed a March and an April of bitter and incessant east winds. We have a record of two more dinner-parties, one with the Prince of Wales at Marlborough House, on Saturday, March 19, and another with Harcourt in Grafton Street during the week, and then on the following Wednesday Beaconsfield succumbed and went to bed with a chill, and a further attack of the asthmatic symptoms which had troubled him so long. Dr. Kidd was in attendance, as in recent years; the patient was nursed by his valet Baum and his wife under Barrington's supervision, and for some days there seemed to be nothing to distinguish this attack from others which the usual remedies had after a while subdued. On the Saturday he had a talk with Salisbury, Cranbrook and Cairns about Majuba and the Transvaal, and on the Sunday (March 27) Barrington took Dilke, whom he had met in Curzon Street, in to see him. Dilke found him lying on a couch, breathing with difficulty, but 'still the old Disraeli,' and 'his pleasant spitefulness about "Mr.

[1] Elliot's *Life of Lord Goschen*, Vol. I., pp. 247, 248.

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G." was not abated."[1] Lady Bradford, writing to Rowton on April 11, claimed to have been the recipient of Beaconsfield's last visit, and to have been the last person, outside of Rowton, Barrington, and Rose, to have seen him in his own house. Beaconsfield continued his confidential correspondence with his Sovereign from his sickroom, and his last letter to Her Majesty was scrawled five days after the beginning of the illness.

To Queen Victoria.

19, CURZON STREET, W., *March* 28, 1881.—With duty. It would be better for your Majesty to communicate directly, as there seems little prospect of my being visible before Easter. I am ashamed to address your Majesty not only from my room, but even my bed.

About the title and the time, your Majesty is the best judge of such matters, but I should be able, I hope, to write to your Majesty on any point that may arise, in a day or two.

At present I am prostrate, though devoted.—B.

That evening the Queen became anxious, and expressed to Barrington, who was dining at Buckingham Palace, her strong desire that further medical advice should be obtained; following up her conversation with a letter in which she told him that it was his duty to require Dr. Kidd to call in someone else, and that he was incurring a grave responsibility in not doing so. The same judgment was formed independently on the next morning by Beaconsfield's old friend, and confidential adviser, Rose; who was shocked at the patient's appearance and his difficulty in breathing, and obtained his consent, subject to Barrington's approval, to call in the best chest doctor available, such as Dr., afterwards Sir Richard, Quain. Kidd readily agreed, but there was a serious professional difficulty in the way. Kidd was a homœopathist; and the regular practitioners were bound by their trade union rules not to meet homœopathists in consultation. Barrington and Rose only obtained Quain's consent by representing that it would be disloyalty to the Queen to refuse, and by procuring from Kidd a written promise to

[1] *Life of Dilke*, Vol. I., p. 411

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act strictly under Quain's advice and an assurance that he had not been treating Beaconsfield homœopathically but allopathically. In these circumstances Quain was advised by the leader of his profession whose advice he sought that he ought to take the case; the first consultation was held on that afternoon, and a trained nurse procured. A few days later another physician—Dr. Mitchell Bruce, of the Brompton Hospital—was called in to relieve Kidd of the night work, and a second nurse was provided, so that the skilled attendance might never be interrupted.

Quain and Kidd, in the early stages, were both hopeful; but Beaconsfield seems never to have varied in his belief that this was the end. On Rose's first visit he said, 'Dear friend, I shall never survive this attack. I feel it is quite impossible. . . . I feel this is the last of it.' And two days later, when Rose saw him next, and received his final instructions as to the future, he said in the most clear and distinct tones, 'I feel I am dying. Whatever the doctors may tell you, I do not believe I shall get well.' When he read one day the bulletin, 'Lord Beaconsfield's strength is maintained,' he remarked, 'I presume the physicians are conscious of that. It is more than I am;' and he demurred to the word 'well,' in a statement that he had 'taken nourishment well.' The disease took the form of violent spasms at intervals; and the doctors insisted on the extreme importance of keeping their patient quite quiet and free from visitors. This system, on the whole, chimed in with his own inclination, for he even looked forward to the prospect of Rowton's return with dread. But occasionally in the early part of the illness, on his good days, he resented the cordon drawn round his room, and would not be denied a little conversation with his intimate friends, such as Rose and Barrington. 'It does me good,' he said once to Rose, 'and distracts me and helps me to get through the day.' His kindness and consideration to doctors, nurses, and servants never failed; and there was, now and again,

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a recrudescence of the old ironic wit. When they sought to ease his recumbent attitude by a circular air-cushion, from which any casual puncture would drain the life, he waved it off, saying, 'Take away that emblem of mortality.'

His mind does not seem to have dwelt at all continuously on public affairs, but it amused him on March 31 to correct the proof of his last speech in Parliament for Hansard. 'I will not go down to posterity,' he explained, 'talking bad grammar.' Again, when Rose saw him on April 1 he showed great interest in hearing about the debate in the House of Lords on the negotiations with the Boers after Majuba, and especially about Cairns's great speech which finished with the quotation:

> In all the ills we ever bore,
> We grieved, we sighed, we wept; we never blushed before.

'Capital,' he said. 'But this is all my arrangement. I settled it all. I felt that the eyes of the country ought to be opened, and that there was no one who could do it like Cairns.'

Rose told him, on this occasion, of the general sympathy; of a postcard that had come from a working man—'Don't give up, old man, we can't spare you.' Indeed, ever since the summons to Quain and the issue of regular bulletins had made people aware that Beaconsfield's illness was serious, there had been an extraordinary manifestation of public feeling in his favour. During the three weeks of his ceaseless fight with death the whole country seemed to be waiting anxiously for the latest news from his sick-bed; and the occasional intimations of progress made, showing that his physicians had not yet lost hope, were everywhere hailed with unfeigned relief. In London, where he was perhaps best known and best liked, sympathy was peculiarly acute; the inquiries in Curzon Street were ceaseless. Nor was it only in this country that the daily bulletins were eagerly scanned. Throughout the British Empire and in foreign countries

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men followed with painful interest the details of the illness of the great imperial and international statesman.

No one was more sympathetically anxious than the Queen. Her telegrams and letters to Barrington came day after day. She kept the sick-room supplied with spring flowers from Windsor and Osborne, and wrote occasionally direct to the patient himself. On March 31 she sent a 'little note' and primroses, and 'perhaps Lord Barrington will let her know if he [Beaconsfield] is pleased with them.'

From Queen Victoria.

WINDSOR CASTLE, *March* 30, 1881.

DEAR LORD BEACONSFIELD,—I am so thankful to hear you are better and more comfortable, and send these few lines to say how grateful I am for your little note of Monday.

I send some Osborne primroses and I meant to pay you a little visit this week but I thought it better you should be quite quiet and not speak. And I beg you will be very good and obey the doctors and commit no imprudence. . . .

Hoping to hear a good report of you to-night and that Lord Rowton will be back very soon, Ever yours very affly., V.R.I.

Everyone is so distressed at your not being well. Beatrice wishes I should say everything kind to you.

Her Majesty, who had not seen her friend for nearly four months, longed to pay him a personal visit, but responded loyally to the desire of the doctors to keep their patient quiet. She wrote to Barrington from Windsor on April 3: 'If he continues to improve, she will not propose to visit him, as it is clear that quiet had done good and it would, she fears, agitate him. Unless, therefore, dear Lord B. expressed a wish to see the Queen (when of course she would be delighted to go up and see him), or should he get much worse (which, please God, is not now very likely), when she would wish to see him for a moment, she will not propose to go up before going to Osborne.' Before she left for the Isle of Wight on April 5 she sent a special messenger with flowers and a letter which was to be read to Beaconsfield, if he could not read it himself;

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'there is nothing,' she assured Barrington, 'agitating in it.' On receiving the letter the old statesman poised it in his hand and, after consideration, said, 'This letter ought to be read to me by Lord Barrington, a Privy Councillor,' and Barrington was duly summoned for the task. At the close Beaconsfield desired the letter should be locked up in the table by his side where he kept his most private papers.

From Queen Victoria.

WINDSOR CASTLE, *April* 5, 1881.

DEAREST LORD BEACONSFIELD,—I send you a few of your favourite spring flowers—this time from the slopes here. I will send more from Osborne.

I wd. have proposed to come to see you, but I think it is far better you shd. be quite quiet, and that I may then have the great pleasure of coming to see you when we come back from Osborne, wh. won't be long. You are very constantly in my thoughts, and I wish I could do anything to cheer you and be of the slightest use or comfort.

With earnest wishes for your uninterrupted progress in recovery, Ever yours affectionately, V.R.I.

You shall hear of our safe arrival at Osborne as usual.

It was the final letter of a most voluminous correspondence. Before the Queen returned from Osborne, he was dead.

There were the usual fluctuations in the course of the disease. But the physical strength of the patient gradually diminished, and there was a progressive failure of the nerve power, on which, rather than on physical strength, he was long supported. Rowton, when he heard the bad news, came hurrying back from Algiers. But Beaconsfield showed himself, both to Rose and Barrington, very apprehensive of the meeting. 'I cannot see him,' he kept saying. 'Surely Monty, who is so fond of you—you would like to see him when he arrives,' Barrington pleaded. 'You and Rose must arrange it gradually; it would be too great a shock,' he replied. It was on Thursday, April 7, that Rowton joined Rose and Barrington in Curzon Street. But, three days later, his meeting

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with his chief had not yet taken place, and he sent a despairing report to the woman who was the dying man's most cherished friend.

Lord Rowton to Lady Bradford.[1]

19, CURZON STREET, *Sunday 10th* [*April* 1881].—I have indeed, not had the heart to write!

I know how you are feeling for the poor sufferer here, and with us! The doctors have just pronounced almost their one favorable word since I came on Thursday mg., and say 'there is a slight improvement of strength' this afternoon.

But when one sees how weak he is, and how little real nourishment he is taking, the words scarcely raise in one a hope.

God grant I am wrong! It *may* well be! for the doctors are by no means hopeless. But somehow I feel as if I knew better than they! A new mechanical bed has relieved him much, and his suffering is chiefly when difficulty in expectoration comes.

He still shrinks from seeing me! He knows I am always here, day and night, and I have begged him to give no thought to me till we can meet without effort to him. The doctors wish him to be as quiet as possible, and, I think, even were you here, would combat your seeing him! He does not try to read letters.

I have seen *him* often, and do not see any bad change in his face. But the weakness! and how can we overcome it? He is being wonderfully nursed, and, they say, is so gentle and clear and kind. All about him are charmed.

He begs to be told the worst—if it is to be: and I have told the doctors they must do so, should it become evident. He talks of death without a shade of fear. . . .

The reunion of the two men came naturally in a day or two, when Rowton quietly entered Beaconsfield's room and read him a Parliamentary debate for which he had asked; and for the last week Rowton took his natural place as the principal watcher, with Rose and Barrington, by the bed of the dying statesman. Even during these last days there were gleams of hope. On April 15, four days before the end, we find the Queen telegraphing to Barrington: 'Thank God for this good

[1] During the latter portion of Beaconsfield's illness, Lady Bradford was at Weston, nursing her husband through a bad attack of asthma.

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news, which overjoys us; but the care must in no way be relaxed.' The coming Sunday, April 17, was Easter Day, and Rose, an earnest Churchman, remembering that it was Beaconsfield's regular custom to receive the Sacrament on that day in his parish church at Hughenden, wished that he should be reminded and given the opportunity of communicating once more. Rowton and Barrington agreed, but Quain peremptorily forbade the suggestion being made, on the ground that the patient would realise at once that his case was hopeless and would turn his face to the wall and die. 'To myself sitting by his bed at night,' writes Kidd, 'he spoke twice on spiritual subjects, in a manner indicating his appreciation of the work of Christ and of the Redemption.' Two of his last recorded utterances, eloquent, the one of his sufferings, the other of his fearlessness in presence of the Hereafter, were: 'I have suffered much. Had I been a Nihilist, I should have confessed all,' and 'I had rather live, but I am not afraid to die.'

At Eastertide his drowsiness gained on him and passed into stupor; and in the early morning of Easter Tuesday, April 19, it was clear to his friends and physicians gathered round his bed, that he was sinking. Rowton and Barrington clasped his right hand; his left was laid in Kidd's. 'A quarter of an hour before his heart ceased to beat, a strangely affecting movement of the dying man was observed by [his] two devoted political friends . . . The Minister, his ministering over, half raised himself from his recumbent posture, and stretched himself out, as his wont was when rising to reply in debate. Then his lips moved; but no words came to the acutely listening ears about him. Only Death heard.'[1] Here are the simple terms in which Rose described the end to his son, the second Sir Philip Rose: 'He passed away without

[1] Meynell's *Benjamin Disraeli*, p. 199. I am indebted to this 'unconventional biography' for several details, derived apparently from Barrington, of Beaconsfield's last illness. Dr. Kidd's article in the *Nineteenth Century* for July, 1889, has supplied others. But my account is mainly based on a memorandum, unfortunately incomplete, drawn up by Rose.

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suffering, calmly as if in sleep, at 4.30 in the presence of Lord Rowton, Lord Barrington, myself, and the physicians. We kissed his fine noble forehead. . . . I never saw anything more fine and impressive than his peaceful and tranquil expression, and his appearance is one of the greatest dignity and repose.' A Power had passed from the earth.

Rowton sent a detailed account of the last days to Lady Bradford.

Lord Rowton to Lady Bradford.

19, CURZON STREET, *Friday night, April* 22, '81.—Since that dreadful morning I may say I have been unable to write. To-day I have been better: but I had not a moment. When I was at Osborne, when I had hoped for time to send you a few lines, I found my every moment taken up by the Queen, with whom I passed hours telling her all she wished to know of her loved friend. And she did love him.

The last day and hours were distressing from his laboured breathing, but the last minutes and moments were very quiet and evidently quite painless. The very end was strikingly dignified and fine, and as I looked on his dear face, just at the moment when his spirit left him, I thought that I had never seen him look so triumphant and full of victory.

In all those last days he was so brave and gentle, so wonderfully considerate and good to all, that I felt I should have loved him more than ever, had he lived.

He often said he knew he had no chance, and seemed to wish almost that the doctors would tell him so. But they did not know—or would not tell him, and so he glided on till the ship of his life got among the clouds and the breakers, and he began to sink without knowing where he was. And so it came that he had not the opportunity of sending a word to some, to whom, as I thought I could see, he would have sent a loving message had he known what was so near. I never doubted what the end must be. I knew too well, how little of reserve force for long past was left in him.

I am very unhappy! but I won't dwell on that. My life is dreadfully changed. But I have often thought of you and Lady Chesterfield, and known how your dear kind hearts were aching. Will you give her my love and ask her to forgive my not writing to her?

Indeed, till to-day I have scarcely been physically able to do so. Day and night was I with him trying to help him over all his pains and troubles, as each arose, or to dispel

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some of the confusions which came over his poor tired brain. It was weary work that sitting, with my hand in his, in the night watches, trying to guide that mighty mind, as a child's has to be led—that trying to be cheerful, when I could scarcely help weeping! And I was thankful, more than I could ever have deemed possible, when the great peace came over him.

Will you let me know when you come to London? It will be a real comfort to see you; there is none greater than to give and receive sympathy.

How Lady Chesterfield will miss him! I feel for *her* so deeply.

Lady Chesterfield, now quite an old woman, survived Beaconsfield only four years. Lady Bradford lived till 1894, cherishing always as one of her greatest treasures a framed miniature portrait of Beaconsfield,[1] specially designed for, and presented to, her by the Queen, after his death, in memory of their common friend.

Deep and sincere and almost universal was the national mourning for the national loss. It was felt, even by those who had lightly rejected him the year before, that the country was infinitely the poorer for his death; that a true lover and faithful servant of England was gone. Great as he had been in his day of power, he had seemed even greater in the manly fashion in which he had accepted the decision of the polls, neither whining nor sulking, but still, in spite of age and illness, labouring for his country's good. Abroad it was everywhere recognised that indeed a prince and great man had fallen in Israel.

The Queen's grief was profound; in some of her letters she said she was 'heart-broken.' She summoned Rowton to Osborne to tell her everything and answer all her questions; but she did not wait for his arrival before giving expression to her deep feeling. She wrote with her own hand the notice in the Court Circular: 'The Queen received this morning, with feelings of the deepest sorrow, the sad intelligence of the death of the Earl of Beaconsfield, in which Her Majesty lost a most devoted friend and counsellor, and the nation one of its most distinguished

[1] Reproduced to face p. 580

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statesmen.' And this was her first outpouring of sorrow to Barrington:

Queen Victoria to Lord Barrington.

OSBORNE, *April* 19, 1881.—The Queen meant to write to Lord Barrington before she received his sad and touching letter giving the details—so painfully interesting—of the last hours and moments of the life of her beloved and valued friend and counsellor. She feels very keenly not having seen him, or even looked at him once more, but then she feared the great agitation for him, and it might have been painful to all. And she grieves now to think she cannot see him even in his last sleep—as she has so many valued friends. But it is too far off and the weather too uncertain.

Words are too weak to say what the Queen feels; how overwhelmed she is with this terrible, irreparable loss—which is a national one—and indeed a great one to the world at large! His kindness and devotion to the Queen on all and every occasion—his anxiety to lighten her cares and difficulties she never, never can forget, and will miss cruelly. The Queen feels deeply for all dear Lord Beaconsfield's friends, and for his many followers who have lost so admirable and wise a Leader. The Queen would wish to thank Lord Barrington for his constant attention in telegraphing to her. All is silent now, and still; and the terrible void makes the heart sick. What three weeks of anxious watching—of hopes and fears—these have been; just three weeks yesterday since Lord Barrington dined with the Queen and first expressed anxiety!

No one felt the blow more keenly than those who, now that Beaconsfield was gone, were left to be the standard-bearers of the Conservative cause. Northcote wrote to Rowton on hearing the news:

I can't write about the dear Chief. The last twenty years come back upon me too strongly just now to let me realise the end of a long and close friendship. The sun has been taken out of our political system; but that is not all our loss. There was such a wonderful power of sympathy in him that one felt sure of his understanding all sorts of feelings and giving comfort and counsel in all sorts of difficulties.

And Salisbury, in a letter to H. C. Raikes on April 26, said, 'I have just returned from the old chief's funeral. It was a very striking sight, and to me inexpressibly sad.

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It seems like the passing away of an epoch. What is it that lies before us ?'

On the day of Beaconsfield's death Gladstone, as Prime Minister, offered, by telegram and letter, the honour of a public funeral,[1] feeling assured that, in so doing, he was 'acting in conformity with the general expectation and desire.' Such a national tribute had been amply earned; but the old statesman had left with Rowton and Rose, and inserted in his will, definite instructions that he was to be buried at Hughenden with his wife and that his funeral was to be conducted with the same simplicity as hers was. Any hesitation that his secretary and executors may have felt was finally set at rest by finding in their chief's private despatch box Lady Beaconsfield's touching letter[2] of farewell to her husband, desiring that he and she, who were so united in life, should lie in the same grave after death. It might seem more fitting that one who delighted in gorgeous ceremonial, and who always carried himself with picturesque distinction through the pageant of life, should be borne with stately ritual through mourning crowds to a resting-place among his peers in the historic Abbey. But there was another side to his character, which suited well with his own quiet country churchyard. Artificial as he was in many ways, few men have more relished the simpler sources of happiness: wife and home, reading and writing, trees, flowers, and birds, old friends and small kindnesses.

So it was the man, rather than the statesman and author, who was uppermost in the thoughts of the illustrious assemblage which gathered on April 26 at Hughenden. There the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Connaught were in attendance; and Prince Leopold, representing the Queen whom Beaconsfield had so devotedly served. Thither came the Ambassadors of Germany, Austria, and Turkey, and Russell Lowell,

[1] Beaconsfield had, as Prime Minister, made a similar offer to Lady Russell on her husband's death; but it was Russell's desire, as it was Beaconsfield's, to rest in Bucks—among his ancestors at Chenies.

[2] Quoted in Vol. V., p. 232.

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at once the Minister of the mighty Anglo-Saxon State across the ocean and a literary man of high distinction. There, with the exception of Cranbrook, who was in Italy, were almost all Beaconsfield's old colleagues—conspicuous among them Salisbury, of late his right-hand man and destined successor; Northcote, stanchest of lieutenants and friends; John Manners, lifelong comrade in political action; Cairns, the weightiest in counsel of all; and Derby, present to bury in the grave the discords of the last three years and to revive the memories of a political discipleship of a quarter of a century. Nor were there wanting worthy representatives of his political opponents. If Gladstone was kept away by business and Granville by illness, Hartington, between whom and Beaconsfield there had been much mutual liking and respect, attended, along with other leaders of the future, such as Harcourt and Lord Rosebery, who both had recollections of visits to Hughenden in happier days and of pleasant saunter and converse with its dead master. Personal as well as political friendship of long standing brought Abergavenny and Henry Lennox. Art was represented by Leighton and Millais. Lytton followed to the grave the chief who had raised and upheld him; and it was fitting that the Duke of Portland,[1] head of the Bentincks, should come to show respect for the coadjutor and biographer of his cousin Lord George. Bradford's presence recalled the tenderer intimacies of recent years. Prominent among the mourners were the faithful three who had kept vigil in Curzon Street, Rowton, Barrington. and Rose; and associated with Rose was the other executor, Sir Nathaniel de Rothschild, afterwards Lord Rothschild, Baron Lionel's eldest son. The family mourners were only two, Ralph Disraeli, Clerk Assistant in the House of Lords, the sole surviving brother, and his son, Coningsby, his uncle's heir, as yet but a boy. Among the wreaths which covered the coffin and the bier were two from the Queen, one being entirely of fresh primroses,

[1] Beaconsfield had accepted an invitation to Welbeck for this very Easter.

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with the legend, 'His favourite flowers, from Osborne, a tribute of affection from Queen Victoria.' After a simple service conducted by the vicar in the village church, the remains of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, borne by the tenants of the estate, were laid to rest by the side of his wife in the vault which he had had constructed just outside the eastern wall; and with him in the coffin, next his heart, was buried the farewell letter which that wife had written him five and twenty years before. In the same vault had long reposed in death Mrs. Brydges Willyams, his friend and benefactress;[1] and his last brother, Ralph, filled, some years later, a neighbouring grave.

Four days after the funeral, on April 30, Beaconsfield's royal mistress came to Hughenden to bid a personal farewell to her favourite Minister in his tomb. She had last seen him when she parted from him at Windsor at the close of his visit from December 8 to December 10. He had then driven home by Rose's house of Rayners at Penn, and had lunched there, entering Rayners park by Loudwater gate and leaving by Criers-hill. The Queen determined to follow the same route in her pilgrimage to Hughenden churchyard; and accordingly the royal carriages were conducted by Rose's servant through the park from lodge to lodge by the exact way that Beaconsfield had taken. Similarly at Hughenden, Her Majesty trod in the path by which his body had been borne to the grave; and the vault was reopened that she might lay on his coffin yet another wreath. Nor could the Queen's loyalty to him who had been so loyal to her be satisfied till, from her privy purse, she had erected in Hughenden Church, over the seat in the chancel which he had been wont to occupy, a personal monument[2] in marble to his memory. It is in three compartments, with his arms on top, his portrait in profile in the centre, and below the following inscription: 'To the dear and honored memory of Benjamin, Earl of

[1] See Vol. III., ch. 13.

[2] Reproduced to face p. 464.

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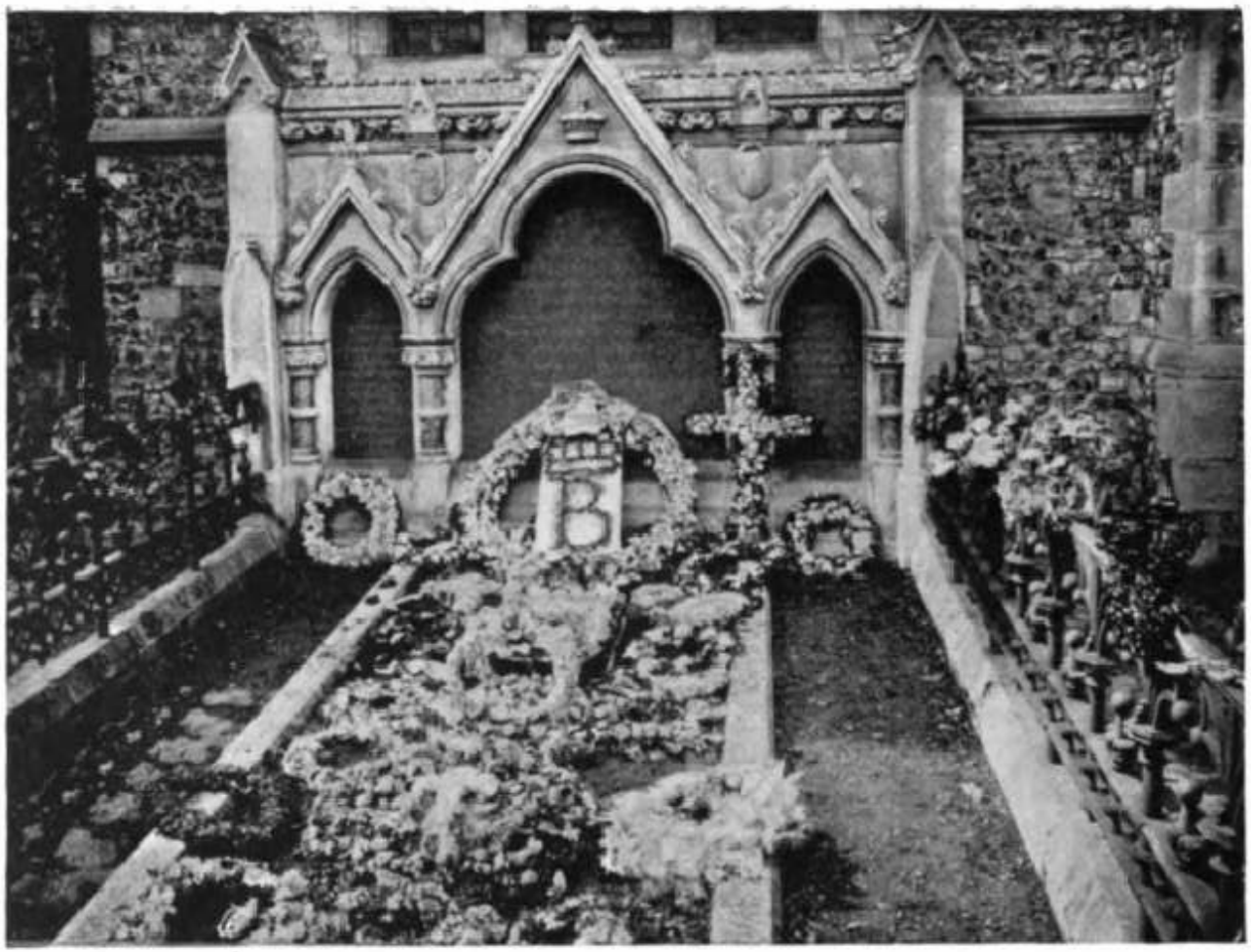

THE GRAVE, SHOWING THE QUEEN'S WREATH.

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Beaconsfield, this memorial is placed by his grateful Sovereign and Friend, Victoria R.I. "Kings love him that speaketh right," Proverbs, xvi. 13. February 27, 1882.'

The death came in the Easter recess. When Parliament reassembled, both Houses voted, in accordance with precedent, the erection, at the public expense, of a statue of the great Minister and consummate Parliamentarian in Westminster Abbey, the Lords with unanimity, the Commons with a dissenting minority less in proportion than that which, at Fox's instance, had disputed a similar public honour to Pitt. Gladstone, the Leader of a House of Commons elected to overthrow Beaconsfield's Government and reverse his policy, was in a delicate position, as the proposer of such a resolution; but he acquitted himself with taste and dignity. He impressed upon the House that not only had Beaconsfield sustained a great historical part but that his actions had received at the time the full constitutional authority of Parliament. Besides the happy quotation, already mentioned,[1] about the return from Berlin, he dwelt on his unique career, on his loyalty to his race, on his pure domestic life, and on the absence of personal animosity in his dealings with political opponents. The following passage was felt to be alike absolutely true and absolutely sincere:

There were certain great qualities of the deceased statesman that I think it right to dwell upon . . .—qualities immediately connected with conduct—with regard to which I would say, were I a younger man, that I should like to stamp the recollection of them on myself for my own future guidance, and with regard to which I would confidently say to others who are younger than myself that I strongly recommend them for notice and imitation. They were qualities not only written in a marked manner on his career, but possessed by him in a degree undoubtedly extraordinary. I speak, for example, of such as these—his strength of will; his long-sighted persistency of purpose, reaching from his first entrance upon the avenue of life to its very close; his remarkable

[1] See above p. 358.

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power of self-government; and last, but not least, of all, his great parliamentary courage—a quality in which I, who have been associated in the course of my life with some scores of Ministers, have, I think, never known but two whom I could pronounce his equal.

But it was in the House of Lords that the most delicate appreciation was shown, that the aptest and truest eulogies were delivered. Granville, socially a friend though politically a foe,[1] touched with deft grace on many salient points of the dead leader's character and career. He spoke of his rare and splendid gifts, of his force of character, of his long and continuous service. He reminded the peers that Beaconsfield's great personal success had been achieved by his own strong individuality, without any adventitious circumstances. He dwelt on his mastery, in writing and speaking and conversation, of censure and of eulogy; on his 'singular power of coining and applying phrases which caught the popular mind and which attached praise or blame to the actions of the great parties in the State.' He singled out for notice the tolerance and fairness and forbearance which he had shown to his political opponents and especially to himself in that House, notwithstanding the remarkable power of destructiveness which he possessed and sometimes exercised. He added a tribute to his good nature and kindheartedness in private life, and in particular to his sensitiveness to kindnesses shown him by others. One sentence deserves to be especially remembered: 'The noble earl undoubtedly possessed a power of appealing to the imagination, not only of his countrymen, but of foreigners, and that power is not destroyed by death.' In his peroration Granville dwelt on the cordial reception which Beaconsfield had met with in that House, representative though it was of a proud,

[1] 'Happy Sydney! to be your neighbour!' was Beaconsfield's graceful reply to Granville's announcement that he, as Lord Warden, living at Walmer Castle, had appointed Lord Sydney Captain of Deal Castle—Walmer and Deal forming one continuous town. Even politically Disraeli had, early in 1868, made tentative overtures through Dr. Quin for a working understanding with Granville. See Fitzmaurice's *Granville*, Vol. I., pp. 519, 520; Vol. II., p. 130.

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powerful, and wealthy aristocracy. 'I can conceive no brighter and no more brilliant example of the way in which the portals of this assembly smoothly roll back to admit eminent and distinguished men and welcome them to the very first ranks in the assembly that they so entered, than the example of the late Lord Beaconsfield.'

Salisbury's tribute was at once more weighty and more moving. His close political connection with Beaconsfield was, he reminded the House, comparatively recent. 'But it lasted through anxious and difficult times, when the character of men is plainly seen by those who work with them; and on me, as I believe on all others who have worked with him, his patience, his gentleness, his unswerving and unselfish loyalty to his colleagues and fellow-labourers have made an impression which will never leave me so long as life lasts.' The impression, he said, which Beaconsfield made on the mass of his countrymen was, of course, due to other causes; partly to the peculiar character of his genius, the wonderful combination of qualities rarely found together; partly to the splendid perseverance by which he overcame all obstacles and proved that there was for every Englishman, however humble, an open career leading to the highest positions under the Crown. There was yet another cause.

Lord Beaconsfield's feelings and principles with respect to the greatness of his country, more and more as life went on, made an impression on his countrymen. Zeal for the greatness of England was the passion of his life. Opinions might differ, and did differ deeply, as to the measures and the steps by which expression was given to that dominant feeling; but, more and more as his life went on and drew near its close, as the heat and turmoil of controversy were left behind, as the gratification of every possible ambition negatived the suggestion of any inferior motive and brought out into greater prominence the purity and the strength of this one intense feeling, the people of this country recognised the force with which this desire dominated his actions, and they repaid it by an affection and reverence which did not

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depend on, and had no concern with, opinions as to the particular policy pursued. This was his great title to their attachment, that above all things he wished to see England united, and powerful, and great.

Even so, we may well believe, would the dead man have wished to be praised.

It is a satisfaction to reflect that Beaconsfield's later years were free from those pecuniary troubles which had grievously afflicted his youth and middle age. It is true that he never paid off in his lifetime the mortgage which Andrew Montagu held on Hughenden for £57,000—the enormous sum which represented Disraeli's accumulated indebtedness. But since 1873, owing to Montagu's generosity, he had been paying interest at only 2 per cent. on this mortgage; and during the last twenty years of his life he had received some £35,000 under the wills of Mrs. Brydges Willyams and his brother James, and had made nearly £20,000 by *Lothair* and *Endymion* and the popular reprint of his novels. Most of this money he had prudently invested in Consols, where there were £40,000 standing in his name at his death. Moreover, he had almost doubled the acreage, and in consequence considerably increased the rental value, of the Hughenden estate. Then, although he had lost by his wife's death £5,000 a year and a house in London, he had enjoyed from 1874 to 1880 an official income of the same amount[1] and an official residence which he occupied for about a couple of years; and, when he was out of office, he had received since 1859 a pension of £2,000 a year. Accordingly at his death his financial position was found to be satisfactory. His will was proved originally at £63,000, subsequently increased to £84,000; and the executors were easily able to pay off the mortgage on Hughenden. Owing to the considerable sum realised by the sale of Beaconsfield's

[1] For a year and a half—from August, 1876, to February, 1878—Beaconsfield held the office of Privy Seal (£2,000 a year) in addition to that of First Lord of the Treasury (£5,000 a year); but he only drew his salary as Privy Seal for about half that period.

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personal effects, and to the accumulations of a long minority, continued under the provisions of the will until his nephew attained the age of twenty-five, the estate passed to his heir not merely unembarrassed by mortgage, but also in excellent condition. With pardonable pride in the association of the name and the place, Beaconsfield directed that any future tenant in possession of Hughenden under the entail, who should happen to be otherwise named when he succeeded, should take at once the name of Disraeli. Even in these revolutionary days, there will be a widespread hope that it may be long before the lord of the manor of Hughenden is of any other blood or bears any other name.

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CHAPTER XVII.

The Man and His Fame.

A politician who looms very large to his own contemporaries is frequently forgotten almost before the grass has grown on his grave. Even a veritable statesman often undergoes temporary oblivion in the years immediately following his death, and is only resuscitated and placed in his proper niche in history by a subsequent generation. Disraeli's fame was never forgotten nor obscured. It was kept alive from year to year through a popular observance and through the development of a popular political organisation.

The legend, 'his favourite flowers,' attached by the Queen to the wreath of primroses which she sent to be laid on his coffin, surprised and puzzled the world. Surely, people said, there must be some mistake. A man whose pet bird was a peacock must have had a correspondingly flamboyant taste in flowers. To so bizarre and sophisticated a statesman, a primrose, even if the gift of a Queen, could but have been a yellow primrose, and nothing more. Had he sung the praises of primroses in his novels? They were only mentioned, it appeared, in *Coningsby* as a suitable natural object to which to compare a dish of hissing bacon and eggs, and in *Lothair* as making a capital salad! So unaccountable did the Queen's statement seem that the far-fetched suggestion was hazarded, that by 'his' Her Majesty meant the Prince Consort's—a suggestion which was even accepted in quarters which should have known Disraeli better. Those intimates who noticed how he relished simple country pleasures—though he preferred trees to

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any flowers—were not surprised, nor will the readers of this biography have been. It may be impossible to prove that he honoured the primrose above all other flowers; but it is certain that he gave Queen Victoria, and several of his friends, excellent reasons for believing so. Year by year, in March and April, the Queen, as we have seen, sent her Minister spring flowers, mainly primroses and violets, from Windsor and Osborne; and his acknowledgments generally singled out the primroses —ambassadors, as he called them, of spring—for especial admiration. Some of his phrases have been quoted already. Here are more extracts from his letters. On April 21, 1876: 'He likes the primroses so much better for their being wild; they seem an offering from the Fauns and Dryads of the woods of Osborne.' On March 28, 1878: 'Some bright bands of primroses have visited him to-day, which he thinks shows that your Majesty's sceptre has touched the Enchanted Isle.' Guests who dined with him just after one of these consignments had arrived remembered how he would say with pride when they admired the heaped-up bowls of primroses that formed the table decoration: 'They were all sent to me this morning by the Queen from Osborne, as she knows it is my favourite flower.' And he told some of those who condoled with him on his loss of power in April, 1880, that he was looking forward now to enjoying his favourite primroses at Hughenden. For at Hughenden he cultivated them freely in the German Forest and the Park, and gave the woodmen strict orders to protect the wild plants. More than most men did the ageing Beaconsfield welcome each year the approach of spring, as, owing to recurrent asthma and bronchitis, it was only in 'Favonian' airs that he could freely breathe; and his affections were naturally attracted to the typical spring flower.

The controversy had definitely connected Beaconsfield with the primrose in the public mind, and, as the first anniversary of his death drew near, without any notably

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successful exploits having been performed by his rival and successor to dim the lustre of the departed leader, both the man and the flower were much in people's thoughts. A letter in *The Times* of April 14 crystallised the vague sentiment of the public and led directly to the observance of April 19 as Primrose Day.

To the Editor of 'The Times.'

It is an interesting fact worth noting that during the last day or two a demand has arisen at florists' in London, at least in every part of the West End, for what are called 'Beaconsfield buttonholes'—that is, small bunches of primroses, for wearing on the anniversary of Lord Beaconsfield's death on the 19th inst. It will be remembered that the primrose was his favourite flower. This spontaneous expression of popular sentiment is, so far as it has come under my own observation, altogether apart from party feeling, any exhibition of which, on such an occasion, would, indeed, be a desecration of Lord Beaconsfield's memory. It has always been a popular practice, as classical mythology, Church history, and heraldry prove, to associate great names with particular flowers; and it is still in full force. . . .

The purpose of my letter . . . is . . . to place on open record the small beginnings of what may gradually grow into a settled popular custom, more honouring in its simple, unbought loyalty to Lord Beaconsfield's memory, and more truly English, than the proudest monument of bronze or marble that could be raised to his name.

The letter was signed 'Out of the Hurly-Burly'; but the writer was the eminent Anglo-Indian, the late Sir George Birdwood, who, in his enthusiasm for his brilliant idea, had himself been largely responsible for those preparations for an outbreak of primroses on April 19 which he recounted so objectively. In spite, or perhaps partly because, of the tactless sneers of the Liberal press, the idea appealed at once to the popular imagination. Buttonholes of primroses were very noticeable in London on the day in 1882; and next year, stimulated by a further letter in *The Times* from Birdwood, under the signature this time of 'Hortus Siccus,' and by the ceremony of the unveiling on April 19 of the

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Beaconsfield statue in Parliament Square, there was a general floral observance of Primrose Day, which thenceforward was definitely established as a popular institution. This wearing of the primrose suggested in that year of 1883 to the ingenious mind of Drummond Wolff the further idea of a great organisation to popularise the Tory principles of which Beaconsfield was the exponent; and the scheme was enthusiastically worked out by the Fourth Party and by Borthwick of the *Morning Post*. Thus out of Primrose Day grew the Primrose League, with its glittering array of knights, dames, and associates, and its profitable adaptation of social influences to political ends—a League which has long taken rank as one of the most numerous and most efficient political organisations in existence. Never had a dead statesman so marked a tribute paid to the persistence of his fame. Even the Great War has not affected the observance of Primrose Day. The statue in Parliament Square is still decorated on that day with 'his favourite flower' in honour of a statesman who has been dead nearly forty years; still a great proportion of the population, male and female, appear in the streets on April 19 wearing bunches or buttonholes of primroses.

What qualities in Disraeli, what political achievement of his, gained him this unique position in the affection and recollection of his countrymen? Why has honour been paid to him which was never offered to Chatham or Pitt, to Peel, Palmerston, or Gladstone? Something, no doubt, is to be attributed to the flower, so pretty, so popular, so abundant throughout the English countryside; and to the happy coincidence of the date of the anniversary with the season at which the primrose is in fullest bloom. Some influence, too, in the building up of a Disraeli tradition may be ascribed to the cruel disillusion of the performances of the second Gladstone Government; to the associations called up by the names of Bradlaugh, Majuba, Boycott, Kilmainham, Phœnix Park, Penjdeh, and Gordon. But the main grounds for

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the enduring reputation to which the general observance of Primrose Day bears witness are, of course, to be found in the man himself and in his career. Not, indeed, that the public mind has fastened on any of his particular strokes of policy—Reform Bill, Suez Canal purchase, augmentation of Royal title—great and fertile as many of them are proved to have been. Not mainly by these has his permanent fame been secured; but by his marvellous rise from the midst of a then despised race to the summit of power, by his mysterious and romantic personality, by the high and imperial patriotism of his ideas, and by that imaginative quality in him which fired the imagination of others. Though these features of his life and character are writ large over this and the preceding volumes, something more may perhaps be said here in conclusion about each of them.

The progress from a middle-class Jewish literary home to Downing Street and the Congress Hall of Berlin could not be better portrayed than in some striking lines from Tennyson's *In Memoriam;* lines which, nevertheless, were in no sense suggested by Disraeli's career, and were, indeed, composed at a time when his public course was not half run. The extraordinary manner in which they fit that career was first pointed out by Sir John Skelton, one of Disraeli's most judiciously appreciative admirers. Tennyson writes of 'a divinely gifted man,'

> Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
> And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
> And breasts the blows of circumstance,
> And grapples with his evil star;
>
> Who makes by force his merit known,
> And lives to clutch the golden keys,
> To mould a mighty state's decrees,
> And shape the whisper of the throne;
>
> And, moving up from high to higher,
> Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope
> The pillar of a people's hope,
> The centre of a world's desire.[1]

[1] Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, canto 64.

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The first two stanzas would not need the alteration of a syllable to meet the case, so absolutely do they mirror the facts of Disraeli's ascent; and even the swelling words of the last stanza would be felt not greatly to exaggerate his achievements 'on Fortune's crowning slope.' In 1874 he might well seem to be 'the pillar of a people's hope'; and to describe the leading figure of a great European Peace Congress as 'the centre of a world's desire' would be a poetical licence of no excessive kind.

Here in Disraeli's career there was the realisation in fact of the dream which has floated before the eyes of many an ambitious youth; a clear proof that there is no eminence to which genius, aided by courage, resolution, patience, industry, and 'happy chance,' may not attain in this free country of ours. And though it was attained in this case, as in most others, 'by force,' it was in fair and open Parliamentary fight; and, as regards the main struggle, in what looked at first like a hopeless defiance hurled by a pigmy at a giant. It is nonsense to talk as if Disraeli betrayed Peel; if there was any betrayal, it was by Peel of his party. Peel may have been right in his change of front, and the Victorian age thought he was; but Disraeli, who championed the principles on which he and the rest of Peel's followers had been elected, no more betrayed Peel than Hartington betrayed Gladstone, when Gladstone suddenly adopted Home Rule, and Hartington, with a remnant of Liberals who were true to their pledges, withstood and routed him. Not only was Disraeli's political advancement won in fair fight. It was also uncontaminated by any suspicion that he was in politics for pecuniary gain. Had that been in any degree his object, he must be reckoned most unsuccessful, as he enjoyed office for only one quarter of the forty years and more during which he sat in Parliament. Moreover, none of his success was due to demagogy; he made no 'pilgrimages of passion' among the

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electorate;[1] nor did he ever appeal for support to private cupidity, but only to public and patriotic principle.

In one respect Disraeli's success was more striking and complete than that suggested in Tennyson's lines. He not only scaled the political ladder to the topmost rung, and 'shaped the whisper of the throne'; he also conquered Society. He dominated the dinner-tables and what he would call the saloons of Mayfair, whenever he cared or could find time to attend them, as well as Downing Street and the Houses of Parliament; and his social triumph, whatever may be thought by philosophers of its intrinsic value, was certainly not less difficult of achievement for a despised outsider than his political, and was perhaps the sweeter to his palate. It is clear from his papers and letters that he was accepted in the last half-dozen years of his life as a competent arbiter in delicate questions arising in what delights to consider itself the Great World.

To the attraction of the dazzling brilliance of Disraeli's rise there was added the further attraction of his mysterious character and strange appearance. Mentally and physically he was quite unlike the traditional type of the British statesman. Hence the unvarying interest and zest with which his sentiments and his action were awaited at any time of crisis. Others might follow a humdrum rule of thumb; whatever Disraeli did, it would not be that. 'What will Dizzy say?' 'What will Dizzy do?' men asked. 'How like Dizzy!' would be the cry, when the witty aphorism had been launched, the unconventional and unexpected step taken. Indeed, the universal use of the pet name 'Dizzy,' recalling the familiar 'Pam' of another popular statesman, was a testimony to the way in which his personality had been taken to the people's heart. At first employed in a spirit

[1] The story goes that when, on some occasion after Berlin, he was wildly cheered by a tumultuous crowd as he drove to Downing Street in an open carriage, he sat quite unmoved and took no notice; alighted and walked up to the door in apparent unconsciousness; and, just as it opened to admit him, turned half round and touched his hat with his hand before disappearing.

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of not always tolerant contempt, it became long before his death a mark of kindly and humorous attachment.

The fundamental fact about Disraeli was that he was a Jew. He accepted Christianity, but he accepted it as the highest development of Judaism. He had inherited from his father a profound interest in English history, literature, society, and tradition, which his own reading and experience had deepened. But he seemed throughout his life never to be quite of the nation which he loved, served, and governed; always to be a little detached when in the act of leading; always to be the spectator, almost the critic, as well as the principal performer. 'No Englishman,' writes Greenwood, 'could approach Disraeli without some immediate consciousness that he was in the presence of a foreigner.'

It was, indeed, a strange and impressive figure that you might meet, any day, in the late seventies during the session, sauntering slowly on Rowton's arm down Whitehall. A frame, once large and powerful, now shrunken and obviously in physical decay, but preserving a conscious dignity, and, whenever aware of observation, regaining with effort an erect attitude; a countenance of deathlike pallor set rigidly like a mask; a high, broad forehead, and straight, well-formed nose; eyes deeply sunken and usually lustreless, but capable of sudden brightening in moments of excitement; a wide, flexible mouth, and firm chin; the whole face in a setting of still abundant hair, kept perennially as black as coal, and arranged with a remnant of curliness over the ears, with one conspicuous curl in the centre of the forehead, and with a small tuft under the chin. A letter of Northcote's to his wife at the opening of Parliament in 1862 dates the origin of the chin-tuft: 'Dizzy,' he writes, 'has set up a small peaked beard.' The curl on the forehead, which came naturally in youth, was a work of careful art in age. 'It was kept in its place,' writes one who, when young, was admitted to the great man's intimacy, 'by being damped and then a yellow bandanna tied tightly round

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it in front, with the ends down his back, till it was dry. I have thus seen him in his bedroom, attired in addition in a dressing-gown of many colours and a silk cord round his waist.'

His mental processes were as unusual as his physical appearance was peculiar. He did not form his opinions by amassing facts, but by some intuitive process of imagination. And so dramatic was the quality of his mind that he seems never to have been conscious of an opinion or conviction without being simultaneously conscious of the effect which its expression would produce. Hence the epigrammatic character of his talk and writing; to which a cynical flavour was added owing to the mask which he seldom put off in public. *Lothair* and *Endymion* recapture and repeat his table-talk, which was uttered with deliberate and impressive sententiousness. The stories told of it were endless. People heard of the royal lady who, indignant at the hesitation shown by Ministers on the Eastern Question, asked him at dinner what he was waiting for, and was told, 'For peas and potatoes, ma'am;' of the charming neighbour whose insidious attempts to wheedle political secrets out of him were met by a pressure of the hand and a whispered 'You darling;' of the public dinner at which the food was poor and cold, and at which Disraeli, when he tried the champagne, remarked with fervour, 'Thank God, I have at last got something warm;' of his grandiloquent excuse for inability to recommend a novel to a neighbour, 'When I want to read a novel, I write one;' of his judgment on a leading politician, nearly as well known in Mayfair as in Parliament, 'He has a fine presence, ancient descent, a ready wit, and no principles; he must succeed.' But silence and self-absorption grew upon Beaconsfield in society along with age and disease; so that Fraser could jestingly maintain that he was, in reality, a corpse which only at intervals came to life.

Beaconsfield could, on occasion, make capital out of his physical infirmities. A bishop of his acquaintance, of an

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unusually touchy disposition, thought that the Prime Minister had intentionally cut him on two public occasions on one day, and wrote a would-be dignified letter to say that, although quite unaware of having given offence, he would accept the intimation that the acquaintance must cease. Beaconsfield's reply was delightful.

10, DOWNING STREET, *May* 5, 1879.—I sincerely regret that I had not the gratification of recognising you at the Levée or the Academy, since it reminds me of the most unfortunate incident of my life—viz., that I am, perhaps, the most short-sighted of H.M.'s subjects.

My friends who are aware of my infirmity treat me with tenderness, and always address me first. Even our most gracious Prince, the Heir Apparent, with whom I have the honour of being in frequent communication, habitually deigns to pardon me for my default. Let me hope that a Christian Bishop will not be less charitable!

The bishop extricated himself with some dexterity from an awkward situation by explaining that he had not been in the habit of associating the idea of infirmity of any kind with the name of Lord Beaconsfield.

When Beaconsfield went down to Hughenden in these later years, the statesman and social oracle became the literary recluse of country tastes. Though often alone there for long periods and, after his release from office, without any pressure of public work to keep him busy, he declared that he never felt dull. He told Barrington that he 'peopled the air with imaginary personages'—personages, no doubt, whose acquaintance, in many cases, we too have made in *Endymion*. Over his solitary and simple dinner he would read one of his favourite authors, mostly classics of either Latin, Italian Renaissance, or English eighteenth-century literature, pausing for ten minutes between each course. He found constant interest in attending to the proper upkeep of his house and park, and to the seemly condition of his estate. We see him, in his letters to his agent, Mr. Arthur Vernon, provident and anxious about the due warming of his library so as to preserve the books, and about the

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necessity of postponing painting so that there might be no smell during the Queen's visit. In one letter he calls attention to the fences of a farm. 'I never in my life saw hedges in a more disgraceful state; absolute gaps, and some filled up by a strong hurdle: the whole presenting a picture which might have been expected in Ireland, but not in the county of Buckingham, and least of all on the Hughenden estate.' Ill-treatment of his beloved trees moves him to quick wrath. He writes to Mr. Vernon in 1879: 'I perceive to my amazement that Mr. —— has horses in the park, contrary to his written engagement to your father, after the great injury that was occasioned to the trees, some years ago, by these animals. There are many trees which were taken out of their cradles last autumn, which are now not secure. I must call your immediate attention to this gross infraction of his agreement by Mr. ——, by which I feel as much aggrieved as injured.' His anxiety, both to secure the comfort of his people and to preserve and improve the amenities of the property, comes out in yet another letter.

To Arthur Vernon.

Private. HUGHENDEN MANOR, *April* 3, 1877.—Going to Q. Sess. yesterday, I left Hughenden by the Aylesbury lodge. I was pained, and distressed, at the scene of desolation I witnessed on the Park Road, near the Church. There was some excuse, in old days, for permitting a stack near that building, for it was beggarly and hideous; but now the nuisance seems to have been removed, in consequence of the restoration of the structure, is advanced to the roadside, and is guarded by rough pales.

After the great trouble I have taken to civilise this approach, I really cannot endure the present aggravated state of affairs.

I require that there shall be no more stacks permitted in that part of the park; that the place shall be entirely cleared, and sown with the best grass seed; so that we may have in time a good sward.

I visited the cottages, but was amazed to find that the dwellers therein were plagued with smoky chimneys. This pest destroys all the comfort and beauty of home. Is it impossible to build a cottage without smoky chimneys?

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I remember our great annoyance and trouble at the principal lodge, but, there, the discomfort was ultimately overcome.

I am anxious to know that the new cottagers are comfortable, and I wish their abodes to be more than comfortable: their gardens should be assisted with flowers, and there shd. be some trees planted in them. Gibbons must have some in the nursery, conifers and plants and trees of that kind.

Lytton wrote to Rowton after Beaconsfield's death: 'What stranger or what unborn biographer will have any means of knowing, in their right proportion to his whole character, all the lovable sides of it—the warmth of his heart, his domestic tenderness, his filial piety, his loyalty to friends, his complete freedom from malice and vindictiveness?' A constant, if imperfect, attempt has been made throughout this biography to bring out these lovable qualities, and to show the depth of feeling concealed beneath the cynical mask. Some lighter touches may be added.

Disraeli, who never had the happiness of a family of his own, always enjoyed himself in the company of children and young people, and made himself much liked in the families of his friends. 'The young ones think Dizzy the most charming playfellow they ever met,' wrote his host to him at the close of a country-house visit in 1855. His letters to Lady Bradford and Lady Newport show how devoted he was to Lady Bradford's grandchildren. And, during the last three years of his life, he was a very welcome guest in the family party at Hatfield. He took a constant interest in the development of his nephew Coningsby. 'I am glad you can give me so good an account of yourself,' he wrote to the boy in 1876, 'and that you have gained prizes both in Latin and in French. Next to your own, these are the two languages which will be most useful to you.'

At a dinner at Lord Wilton's house on June 19, 1879,[1] Beaconsfield had the misfortune, when cutting bread, to cut a finger of his left hand rather badly. The Princess of Wales bandaged it for the moment with her handker-

[1] See above, p. 437.

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chief. 'I asked for bread and they gave me a stone,' Beaconsfield murmured, 'but I had a princess to bind up my wounds.' After dinner a very junior local practitioner was, in the absence of his chief, called in to strap the finger up in proper fashion. He was treated with Beaconsfield's invariable courtesy, playfully called his 'guardian angel,' told to come round and complete his treatment next morning in Downing Street, and there shaken hands with and cordially thanked.

G. W. E. Russell tells the following story:

A well-known and delightful lady tried to make him read *The New Republic*, and write a favourable word about it for the author's encouragement. He replied: 'I am not as strong as I was, and I cannot undertake to read your young friend's romances; but give me a sheet of paper.' So then and there he sate down and wrote: 'Dear Mrs. S——, I am sorry that I cannot dine with you next week, but I shall be at Hughenden. Would that my solitude could be peopled with the bright creations of Mr. Mallock's fancy!' I have always thought that 'bright creations,' as an epitome of a book which one had not read, was a stroke of genius.[1]

A final instance must be given of Beaconsfield's capacity for playful unbending among his intimates. In his last years he united his especial women friends into a fantastic fellowship or order; and he gave each member as a badge a small brooch of insect shape. At first, in presenting the brooch, he wrote of it as a 'fly'; but after a while, apparently with a punning reference to the initial of his title, as a 'bee'; and the order was termed the Order of the Bee (B). Princess Beatrice, with the Queen's approval, accepted one of these brooches on her twenty-first birthday. The other members of the order appear to have been Lady Bradford, Lady Chesterfield, Lady Newport, Lady Beauchamp, and the Ladies Maud and Gwendolen Cecil, with perhaps one or two more. 'I am much flattered,' wrote a neophyte, on receipt of the badge, 'at being enrolled among the distinguished ladies

[1] G. W. E. Russell's *Portraits of the Seventies*.

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whom you delight to honour.' Montagu Corry was dubbed C.B., Chancellor of the Order of the Bee. To institute a female fellowship of this kind was a congenial relaxation to a statesman who could write to Lady Bradford: 'I hate clubs, not being fond of male society.'

Among the papers left by Mr. Monypenny there were found several stray paragraphs in his handwriting, apparently composed after he had worked through his material, and obviously meant for incorporation in some form in his final estimate of Disraeli's character and career. It is of course impossible to say whether he might not have modified his judgments on further consideration; but it has been a real satisfaction to his successor to collect and edit the most noteworthy and most finished of these fragments, and to include them in the last chapter of a work which will always bear his name on the title-page. Here is what Mr. Monypenny has written:

I have sometimes been asked if my book would at last dispel the mystery that surrounds Disraeli; and my answer has invariably been that, unless the mystery remained when I had finished my labours, I should have failed in my task of portraiture; for mystery was of the essence of the man. Yet to those who want, not portraiture but explanation, not synthesis but analysis, there is really no mystery at all except in the sense in which every personality is mysterious. Given his complex character and genius, and his peculiar origin and environment, everything naturally follows, correspondence, works, and career.

In the first period of his life we see the real Disraeli before he was trammelled by party connection; in the last, again, after he had mastered party. In the middle period—and it is the reason of its comparative lack of interest—he had to pay his tribute to convention; and we only get occasional if startling glimpses of the real Disraeli behind the mask which he had adopted. It is in this period that the legend of the mystery-man grew up.

A recent work insists that will is the distinctive characteristic of the Jewish race, and rightly points out that highly developed will-power tends to dwarf imagination. The will that swoops on its object and makes for success usually goes with a choice of material objects and success of the worldly kind. On the other hand, the brooding temperament that is

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essential to high imagination makes for ineffectiveness and dispersion of will-power. Where the two are combined we get a man of genius. Disraeli had the will of his race in its highest expression; but he had also in a high degree the quality which Houston Chamberlain denies them, imagination.

We read in *Coningsby*: 'What wonderful things are events; the least are of greater importance than the most sublime and comprehensive speculation!' Disraeli had that strong grip and profound appreciation of fact and reality, and that imaginative insight into their significance, to which only the man of ideas and imagination can ever attain. Those who are immersed in facts and cannot look on them from the outside fall short in these mental qualities; and still more, of course, the second order of idealists—those who cannot see the superiority of fact to their own subjective fancies.

How far was he in earnest, how far was he true in his motives, disinterested in his aims, of moral rectitude of character? That in Disraeli there was from the beginning a certain worship of self, not so much in a small or merely selfish sense, but with something that was sincere and almost artistic in the motive, must be obvious to all who have read these pages from the beginning; and this self-worship was often, no doubt, in conflict with that surrender to a great purpose which we associate with the highest greatness. Yet it is easy to exaggerate the importance of this element of self. There is always something impersonal in genius. In his case, no more than in that of a far greater egoist, Napoleon, will self explain everything. There was profound insight in Napoleon's saying, 'I am not a person but a thing;' and in Disraeli's case also the political genius of the man often drove him on regardless of self, and equally regardless, no doubt, of the consciously moral motives of lesser men, and gave to his character an elevation and a self-abandonment almost in his own despite.

Was he sincere? The question seems at once to lead us back into the atmosphere in which Disraeli lived his life, to set up a standard which is inapplicable in his case, to refer the artist to the judgment of the conventicle. There is no absolute sincerity, for no man can be faithful to the truth in all its aspects, and a man may be sincere as an artist, and in a lofty sense, without being conspicuous for the virtue of truthfulness in its elementary form, and without possessing beliefs or convictions in the practical affairs of life, religion, ethics, or politics. Disraeli, however, though an artist, descended into the practical sphere, and must come to judgment at the bar of the practical spirit. We can then see that, though not more untruthful than the mass of mankind, and not wanting

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in high convictions to which he resolutely held, he too often dealt with the lesser convictions in the artist's light-hearted spirit, and so created distrust and marred his own influence. Intellectual sincerity he possessed in a high degree, but he allowed his mind to play too freely and sincerely over everything that came before it to possess moral earnestness in the conventional sense.

Apart from any laxity of principle or anything in his political conduct that might account for his reputation, Disraeli seems to have been one of those men who have the unfortunate knack of inspiring even more distrust than they deserve. From individuals with whom he was brought into intimate relations, whatever the dislike or suspicion with which they began, he would nearly always succeed in winning confidence and esteem; but in that gift, which defies analysis, of inspiring confidence in bodies of men he was curiously deficient—deficient even as compared with men essentially less earnest and less honest.

Disraeli was habitually inaccurate in trifles. His memory was not of the kind that makes faithfulness in such matters easy, nor his conscience of the quality that impels a man to spend effort in attaining it.

In the human tragi-comedy there are few things more diverting, when it is not also provoking, than, in exploring the morals of the past, to find the man of genius, about whom alone we now care, excluded from the coteries of the unmemorable great, or patronised by the petty social potentates of the hour; frowned on by the crowd of merely respectable people whose respectability has not availed to save them from oblivion, or condemned by the multitude of small righteous men, whose righteousness, though it was too much present to their own thoughts, the world has long ago forgotten. Through every phase of Disraeli's career we are confronted every day with these little affectations—these little envies, malices, judgments, rectitudes, and reprobations, which have fallen with those who harboured them; while he, with all his faults, stands there for ever serene and erect, an ironic smile playing about his lips the only reminder of the spleen from which he suffered.

Disraeli was in English politics the embodiment of the counter-revolution, the political creed which does not shrink from democracy nor even from the revolution on its salutary constructive side, but which opposes to the destructive tendencies of both a fuller and wider reconstruction. His Act of 1867 helped to restore to the English Constitution that balance which has almost invariably marked it and which had been disturbed since 1832 by the undue predominance of

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the *bourgeoisie*. With the emergence of the people, the monarchy also re-emerged.

Disraeli's conception of Toryism anticipates the ideal to which we shall attain when the destructive work of Liberalism is fully accomplished, and we have reached that age of stability or reconstruction which calls for a really national party.

Oddly enough, Disraeli, with all his wide interest in, and curiosity about, history, seems never to have cared about the Middle Ages, that great and fascinating period in which the foundations were laid of Western civilisation in its distinctive form and, above all, of Western Christianity. But, perhaps, when we consider his race, the attitude of the Middle Ages towards the Jews, and the extent to which they deprived Christianity of the special colour derived from its Jewish origin, there is nothing odd about it at all.

Both Disraeli and Salisbury had sharp tongues which raised up enemies for them; but both had extraordinary kindness of heart. The Beaconsfield papers abound with evidence of gratitude, alike from intimate friends and from slight acquaintances, for Disraeli's tactful sympathy, thoughtful kindness, willingness to take pains to oblige, and remembrance of his friends and their families when in misfortune, and long after they had lost the power in any way to return his favours. 'Knowing how chivalrously true you always are to your friends,' is the opening of one letter, in 1868. In another, of 1875, we read, 'If anything could have enhanced in my eyes what you have done for me, it is the way in which you have done it, and the note by which you inform me of your decision.'

In the case of Gladstone,[1] and in his case alone, the invincible detachment and tolerant insight, with which Disraeli was wont to estimate the characters of friends and enemies alike, were sometimes conspicuously wanting. In his later years especially, he sometimes failed to understand the motives or to show a just appreciation of the really great qualities of his rival. And yet, even if the following judgment is unkind, what could be more truly the last word as an estimate of Gladstone's literary achievements? 'Mr. Gladstone is an excellent writer, but nothing that he writes is literature.'

[1] Disraeli was, however, always elaborately civil to the Gladstone family. Talking to one of the daughters at some reception, where one of the principal guests was a foreign diplomatist of very varied political career, 'That,' he said in response to her inquiry, 'is the most dangerous statesman in Europe—except, as your father would say, myself, or, as I should prefer to put it, your father.'

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Disraeli's place is not among the greatest of all, the supreme statesmen who lay the foundations of many generations, the supreme poets or men of letters whose works are perennial fountains of wisdom and beauty, the supreme teachers who awaken the conscience and elevate the mind and are an inspiration to mankind in every age. But he remains a unique and fascinating figure with a grandeur of his own which, if strictly neither the grandeur of memorable action on the one hand nor of moral force or intellectual insight on the other, is yet subtly blended of all, has its roots deep down in character, is armed with wide and penetrating vision, and finds expression in spacious and picturesque achievement.

Mr. Monypenny's paragraphs have carried us on from Disraeli's career and personality to his ideas and his imagination,[1] the other potent qualities that have assured his fame. We rather pride ourselves as a nation on our inaccessibility to ideas and take no shame for deficiency in imagination. We are guided, we say, by common sense and not by theories. The Whigs, who governed the country so long, and on the whole so successfully, were eminently distrustful of ideas outside the traditional Whig shibboleth, and were always disposed to compromise and a middle course. The other historical connection, the Tory party, had forgotten, till Disraeli reminded it in forcible fashion, that it had its origin in high and national ideas, and did not represent mere stagnation. But, for all our proclaimed devotion to common sense, there is a deep vein of romance and idealism in the English people, which Disraeli perceived and which he was wont to call enthusiasm. Its workings in politics have been often erratic, and sometimes almost ruinous. But it recognised, more perhaps after death than during life, the kindred nature of Disraeli's spirit, saw that there was a divine spark in him which was commonly wanting in British political leaders, and rescued him from the oblivion which has overtaken most of these in the popular mind.

[1] 'My book opened with personality, ideas, and imagination. With imagination, ideas, and personality it shall close' (Walter Sichel's *Disraeli*, p. 326).

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It is needless, and it would be tedious, to recapitulate here, in the last pages of our detailed story, the multitude of fertile ideas on life in general, and in particular on the political and social past and future of Great Britain and the Empire, which Disraeli's active imagination poured forth throughout his long life in novel and treatise, in letter and speech. Frequently paradoxical, sometimes apparently inconsistent, but always expressed with memorable incisiveness, they penetrated again and again to the heart of a misunderstood situation. Received often at the time of their utterance with scoffing and contempt, they appear in retrospect to have shown, in several cases, an astonishing amount of prophetic insight. Many of them are alive and move the minds of men to-day. And where, even now, we may find it difficult to believe that he was in earnest in the theories he propounded, some of us cannot resist the conviction that a subsequent generation may well accept what we still reject.

The ideas on politics by which he lives group themselves round two broad lines of thought, dealing on the one hand with the consolidation of our far-flung Empire and the assertion of its due influence on the world at large, and on the other with the consolidation of the commonwealth at home by promoting the moral and physical improvement of the people and by welding all classes into an harmonious whole. He sought union, not disintegration, of empire; class co-operation, not class competition and strife, at home; the reconstruction and development, not the destruction, of ancient institutions; abroad, neither selfish isolation nor indiscriminate meddling, but the assumption of a worthy place in the international Areopagus. His famous catchwords, such as 'Imperium et Libertas,' 'Sanitas Sanitatum,' 'a real Throne,' 'the key of India is London,' may appear on a superficial glance to be either paradoxes or truisms; but they embody a wealth of sound political doctrine which repays thorough exploration, and they have pro-

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foundly influenced, and continue profoundly to influence, political development. Moreover, we must never forget that, though he abhorred cant and was wont in consequence to affect a cynicism in speech which belied his real aims, nevertheless the whole of his teaching was directed against a material view of life either for the individual or for the State.

Although it is through his ideas and his imagination that Disraeli will live, he showed on more than one occasion that, when he set his mind to the task, he could rival the practical statesman in legislative achievement. Among the more fruitful Acts of Parliament of the Victorian era a high place is taken by the India Act, the Canada Act, the Reform Act of 1867, the Artisans' Dwellings Act, and the Masters and Workmen Act; all of them passed when Disraeli was either the first or the second person in the Government, and some of them mainly carried through his personal exertions. All of them, too, had the note of construction—the building up of empire or of society; in this resembling other less conspicuous but salutary legislation in which he had a share—such as the London Main Drainage Act, and the Consolidating Acts for Public Health and for Factories.

But there is no need to labour further what is written broadly over the record which has been here presented, largely in his own words, drawn from sources new and old. The evidence is before the reader; it is for him to judge whether the claim for Disraeli of exceptional greatness, only just short of supreme mastery, has been made out. To the present writer, as to his predecessor, looking back over the Victorian age from the disinterested standpoint of to-day, Disraeli appears a grand and magnificent figure, standing solitary, towering above his contemporaries; the man of fervid imagination and vision wide and deep, amid a nation of narrow practical minds, philistine, Puritan-ridden; his life at once a romance and a tragedy, but a splendid tragedy; himself the greatest of our statesmen since the days of Chatham and of Pitt.

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